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# ITALY AND HER INVADERS

*HODGKIN*

VOL. I. PART II.



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# ITALY

AND

# HER INVADERS

BY  
THOMAS HODGKIN

D.C.L., OXFORD AND DURHAM

LITT. D., DUBLIN

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

## VOLUME I

BOOK I. THE VISIGOTHIC INVASION

## PART II

SECOND EDITION

*WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS*

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# CONTENTS

## BOOK I.

### THE VISIGOTHIC INVASION.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### MAXIMUS AND AMBROSE.

A. D.		PAGE
	Authorities . . . . .	409
	Fate of Gratian's followers . . . . .	410
	Ambrose's mission to Trier . . . . .	411
383	Association of Arcadius in the Empire . . . . .	412
	Embassy of Maximus to Theodosius . . . . .	414
	Maximus recognised as legitimate Emperor . . . . .	415
	Renewed discussions about the Altar of Victory . . . . .	416
	'Relatio' of Symmachus . . . . .	419
	Subsidies to the Vestal Virgins . . . . .	420
	Letters of St. Ambrose in reply to Symmachus . . . . .	422
	Valentinian II declines to replace the altar . . . . .	424
385	Dispute between St. Ambrose and the Empress Justina as to the Porcian Basilica . . . . .	425-433
386	Ambrose summoned to the Consistory . . . . .	435
	Psalmody in the great Basilica . . . . .	437
	Relics of Gervasius and Protasius . . . . .	438
	St. Augustine at Milan . . . . .	441
	Character of the government of Maximus . . . . .	442
	Priscillianism . . . . .	445
	The Priscillianists at the tribunal of Maximus . . . . .	447
	St. Martin of Tours . . . . .	448
385	Execution and banishment of Priscillianists . . . . .	450
386	St. Martin at the Court of Maximus . . . . .	452
	Maximus begins to threaten Valentinian . . . . .	455
	Second embassy of St. Ambrose . . . . .	456
	Ostentatious piety of Maximus . . . . .	457

A. D.		PAGE
	Embassy of Domninus . . . . .	459
387	Maximus invades Italy . . . . .	461
	Flight of Valentinian and his mother . . . . .	463
	Theodosius marries Galla, sister of Valentinian . . . . .	464
388	Westward march of Theodosius . . . . .	466
	Execution of Maximus . . . . .	468
	The Western provinces restored by Theodosius to Valentinian . . . . .	469

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE INSURRECTION OF ANTIOCH.

	Authorities: Libanius and Chrysostom . . . . .	470-473
	Chronological table of the insurrection . . . . .	473
	Extravagance of Theodosius . . . . .	474
387	Quinquennalia of Arcadius . . . . .	475
	Social condition of Antioch . . . . .	476-482
	Arrival of the taxation edict. Overthrow of the statues of Theodosius and his family . . . . .	483
	Prompt suppression of the insurrection . . . . .	485
	<i>Laesa Majestas</i> . . . . .	486
	Bishop Flavian departs to intercede for the city . . . . .	489
	Miserable condition of Antioch . . . . .	490
	Sermons of St. Chrysostom . . . . .	491
	Arrival of the Emperor's commissioners, Caesarius and Hellebichus . . . . .	493
	Trial of the accused citizens . . . . .	495
	The hermits throng into the city . . . . .	498
	Journey of Caesarius to Constantinople . . . . .	501
	Flavian's address to Theodosius . . . . .	502
	Antioch pardoned . . . . .	504
	Arrival of the news of pardon . . . . .	507
	Political condition of the Empire as illustrated by the story of the insurrection . . . . .	509

## CHAPTER X.

## THEODOSIUS IN ITALY AND THE MASSACRE OF THESSALONICA.

	Authorities . . . . .	510
	Theodosius and Ambrose. The synagogue at Callinicum . . . . .	511-516
	Renewed petition as to the Altar of Victory . . . . .	516
389	Visit of Theodosius and Honorius to Rome . . . . .	517



# Contents.

vii

A. D.		PAGE
	Panegyric of Pacatus . . . . .	518
	Social condition of Rome as described by Ammianus	519-524
	The Christian aristocracy . . . . .	525
	Chariot-races . . . . .	526
	Theodosius returns to Milan . . . . .	527
390	Outbreak at Thessalonica . . . . .	528
	It is punished by an indiscriminate massacre . . . . .	529
	Indignation of Ambrose. Theodosius placed under an interdict . . . . .	531
	Mediation of Rufinus . . . . .	532
	Penitence and absolution of Theodosius . . . . .	533

## CHAPTER XI.

### EUGENIUS AND ARBOGAST.

	Authorities: Rufinus, Claudian, Prudentius . . . . .	535-537
391	Return of Theodosius to the East . . . . .	538
	Skirmishes with the barbarians . . . . .	539
	Timasius and Promotus . . . . .	539
	Ascendancy of Rufinus . . . . .	540
	Fall of Promotus, Tatian and Proclus . . . . .	541
	Destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria . . . . .	543-548
	Character of Valentinian II . . . . .	549
	Arrogant conduct of Arbogast, the virtual regent of the West . . . . .	551
	Valentinian vainly seeks to dismiss him . . . . .	553
392	Mysterious death of Valentinian II . . . . .	554
	Arbogast proclaims Eugenius Emperor . . . . .	555
	St. Ambrose's funeral oration over Valentinian . . . . .	557
	Theodosius temporises with the usurper . . . . .	559
	Paganising policy of Eugenius and Arbogast . . . . .	560
	Nicomachus Flavianus leads the Pagan party . . . . .	562
	St. Ambrose retires to Florence . . . . .	565
393	Honorius associated in the Empire . . . . .	567
	Mission of Eutropius to an Egyptian hermit . . . . .	568
394	Death of the Empress Galla . . . . .	569
	March of Theodosius through Illyricum . . . . .	569
	Battle of the Frigidus. Defeat of Arbogast . . . . .	570-578
	Death of Eugenius and Arbogast . . . . .	577-578
	Discussion in the Senate as to Pagan sacrifices . . . . .	580-582
395	Consulship of Probinus and Olybrius . . . . .	583

A. D.	PAGE
Death of Theodosius . . . . .	585
His character . . . . .	587
Note F. On the Death of Valentinian II . . . . .	590-593

## CHAPTER XII.

## INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE EMPIRE.

Authorities: Codex Theodosianus, Notitia Dignitatum . . . . .	594-597
Absolute power of the Emperor . . . . .	598
His deification . . . . .	599
Manner of his election . . . . .	600
The Nobilissimi (family of the Emperor) . . . . .	602
Illustres: Spectabiles, Clarissimi . . . . .	603
The Praetorian Prefect . . . . .	604-608
Prefect of the City . . . . .	608
Master of the Offices . . . . .	609
Quaestor . . . . .	610
Count of the Sacred Largesses . . . . .	611
Masters of Horse and Foot . . . . .	612
Division of Civil and Military offices by Constantine . . . . .	613
Superintendent of the Sacred Bedchamber . . . . .	615
Count of the Private Domains . . . . .	616
Counts of the Domestics . . . . .	617
Imperial Consistory . . . . .	617
Prefectures: Dioceses: Provinces . . . . .	618
Table of the Dioceses of the Empire . . . . .	619
Typical arrangement of offices . . . . .	620
Illustration from the Diocese of Britain . . . . .	620-622
Administration of Italy . . . . .	622-623
Survivals of Imperial organisation in modern States . . . . .	624
The Consulate . . . . .	625
Office of the Defensor . . . . .	625-628
Military organisation of the Empire . . . . .	628
Nominal strength of the Imperial army . . . . .	629
<i>Legiones Palatinae</i> . . . . .	631
<i>Auxilia Palatina</i> . . . . .	631
<i>Legiones Comitatusenses</i> . . . . .	632
<i>Legiones Pseudo-Comitatusenses</i> . . . . .	632
<i>Limitanei</i> or <i>Ripenses</i> . . . . .	633
Inferiority of Roman military to civil organisation . . . . .	634

CHAPTER XIII.

HONORIUS, STILICHO, ALARIC.

A. D.		PAGE
	Authorities: Claudian, Orosius . . . . .	636-638
	Birth and childhood of Honorius as described by	
	Claudian . . . . .	640-643
	His real character, or absence of character . . . . .	643
	Birth and parentage of Stilicho . . . . .	645
	His marriage to Serena and upward career . . . . .	646
	Doubt as to his integrity . . . . .	647
	Animosity between Eastern and Western Empires . . . . .	648
	Arcadius is married to Eudoxia . . . . .	650
	Birth and early history of Alaric . . . . .	650-652
	He is chosen king of the Visigoths . . . . .	653
395	His expedition into Greece . . . . .	654
	Double game of Rufinus . . . . .	655
	Stilicho marches against Alaric: is recalled by Arcadius . . . . .	657
	Revenge of the army on Rufinus . . . . .	658
396	Another abortive campaign of Stilicho in Greece . . . . .	660
	Alaric receives an official position in Illyricum . . . . .	661-663
397	Famine in Rome . . . . .	664
	Gildo the Moor . . . . .	665
398	The Gildonic War . . . . .	667
	Defeat and death of Gildo . . . . .	668
	Death of Mascezel, brother and conqueror of Gildo . . . . .	669
	Honorius marries Maria, daughter of Stilicho . . . . .	670
399	Eutropius, the Eunuch, Consul . . . . .	672
400	Stilicho's Consulship . . . . .	673
	Congratulations of Claudian . . . . .	674-675
	Note G. On the name Alaric . . . . .	676
	Note H. On the division of Illyricum . . . . .	677-678

CHAPTER XIV.

ARCADIUS.

	Authorities: Synesius . . . . .	679
	Separation between Eastern and Western Empires . . . . .	680
	Eutropius the Eunuch: his venality . . . . .	681-683
397	St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople . . . . .	684
	Aurelian and the patriotic Roman party . . . . .	684



A. D.		PAGE
399	Oration of Synesius 'on Kingship' . . .	685
	Rebellion of Count Tribigild . . .	687
	Leo's disastrous campaign . . .	688
	Fall of Eutropius : he takes refuge in the great Church	689
	Banishment and death of Eutropius . . .	691
	Gainas in rebellion . . .	692
400	Anti-Gothic tumult . . .	694
	Gainas defeated and slain . . .	695
	Reward of Fravitta, conqueror of Gainas . . .	696
403	Intrigues against St. Chrysostom . . .	698
	His banishment and recall . . .	699
	Eudoxia's statue . . .	699
404	St. Chrysostom's second banishment . . .	700
407	His death . . .	700
404	Death of Eudoxia . . .	701
408	Death of Arcadius . . .	701

## CHAPTER XV.

## ALARIC'S FIRST INVASION OF ITALY.

	Authorities : Prosper and Idatius . . .	702-709
400	Alaric and his nation-army enter Italy . . .	709
	Radagaisus co-operates, possibly in Rhaetia . . .	711
401	Counter-movements of Honorius and Stilicho . . .	712
	Panic at Milan . . .	713
401-402	Stilicho's winter campaign in Rhaetia . . .	715
	Troops withdrawn from provinces for defence of Italy . . .	716
402	Battle of Pollentia . . .	717-722
	Was Pollentia a Roman victory ? . . .	722
	Retreat of Alaric : battle of Verona . . .	723
	Claudian's 'Old Man of Verona' . . .	725
	Effect of the invasion on citizens of Rome . . .	726
404	Triumph of Honorius . . .	727
	Last exhibition of gladiators : story of Telemachus . . .	729
	The last of Claudian . . .	730
405	Invasion of Radagaisus . . .	731
	He is defeated by Stilicho and slain . . .	733
	Note I. On the chronology of Alaric's first invasion	734-736

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FALL OF STILICHO.

A. D.		PAGE
	Authorities . . . . .	737
406	Critical state of the Empire . . . . .	738
	Irruption of barbarians into Gaul . . . . .	739
	Disaffection of army in Britain . . . . .	740
407	Elevation of Constantine . . . . .	741
407-408	His conquests in Gaul and Spain . . . . .	742-744
	Estrangement between Arcadius and Honorius . . . . .	745
	Stilicho's plans of revenge . . . . .	746
408	Death of Arcadius . . . . .	747
	Alaric's claims : debates in the Senate . . . . .	747
	Unpopularity of Stilicho and his family . . . . .	749
	Warring ambitions of Constantine, Alaric, and Stilicho . . . . .	751
	Olympius intrigues against Stilicho . . . . .	752
	Mutiny at Ticinum . . . . .	753
	Flight of Stilicho to Ravenna . . . . .	755
	Death of Stilicho . . . . .	756
	Conflicting evidence as to character of Stilicho . . . . .	757-760
	Revenge of the legions on the <i>foederati</i> . . . . .	760
	Moderation of Alaric . . . . .	761
	Incapable conduct of Honorius . . . . .	761
	Laws against heretics and heathens . . . . .	762
	Case of the heathen Genseridus . . . . .	764

CHAPTER XVII.

ALARIC'S THREE SIEGES OF ROME.

	Authorities . . . . .	766
408	Alaric marches into Italy . . . . .	767
	Eucherius, son of Stilicho, put to death . . . . .	767
	Alaric's <i>First Siege of Rome</i> . . . . .	768-774
	Serena put to death . . . . .	768
	Famine and pestilence in Rome . . . . .	769
	Alaric's terms . . . . .	771
	Recrudescence of heathenism . . . . .	772
	Rome's ransom . . . . .	774
409	Fruitless embassy from Rome to Ravenna . . . . .	777
	Jovius supplants Olympius . . . . .	780

A. D.	PAGE
The oath by the head of Honorius . . .	782
Alaric's <i>Second Siege of Rome</i> . . .	784
The city surrenders. Attalus anti-Emperor . . .	785
Africa to be invaded . . . . .	787
410 Meditated flight of Honorius . . . . .	788
Attalus deposed by Alaric . . . . .	790
Alaric's <i>Third Siege of Rome</i> . . . . .	792-799
He breaks into the city (24th August) . . .	793
Savage deeds of the Goths . . . . .	794
Fugitives to Christian churches unharmed . . .	796-798
The city not greatly injured by the barbarians . . .	799
Effect of the tidings on St. Jerome . . . . .	800-802
On St. Augustine . . . . .	803
The 'De Civitate Dei' . . . . .	803-806
Southward march of the Goths . . . . .	807
Death of Alaric . . . . .	808
His burial under the river Busento . . . . .	809
How Honorius received the news of the fall of Rome . . .	810
Note J. Statistical aspects of the contest between Rome and the barbarians . . . . .	811-816
Number of the Goths . . . . .	811
Of the Roman army . . . . .	812
Population of Italy . . . . .	813
Of Rome . . . . .	815

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE LOVERS OF PLACIDIA.

Authorities : Olympiodorus . . . . .	817-818
Birth and parentage of Galla Placidia . . . . .	819
Placidia taken prisoner by the Gothic army . . . . .	821
Ataulfus, successor of Alaric, becomes philo-Roman . . .	821
And falls in love with Placidia . . . . .	822
His rival, Constantius, the new favourite of Honorius . . .	823
409 Affairs in Gaul and Spain. Entry of the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi into Spain . . . . .	824
Gerontius rebels against Constantine and proclaims Maximus . . . . .	825
411 He takes Vienne and besieges Arles . . . . .	825
Constantius also marches to Arles . . . . .	825
Gerontius flees to Spain. Story of his death . . . . .	826



# Contents.

xiii

A. D.

PAGE

	Arles is taken by Constantius. Constantine and his son are put to death . . . . .	827
413	Revolt of Heraclian, governor of Africa. Its suppression	828
412	The Visigoths march from Italy into Gaul . . . . .	829
	Ataulfus supports the usurper, Jovinus . . . . .	829
	Sarus taken and killed by Ataulfus . . . . .	830
413	Jovinus and his son surrendered by Ataulfus and put to death . . . . .	830
414	Marriage of Ataulfus and Placidia . . . . .	831
415	Death of their only child, Theodosius . . . . .	833
	Ataulfus murdered by his groom . . . . .	834
	Singeric, his successor, insults Placidia . . . . .	835
	He is slain and Walia succeeds him . . . . .	835
416	Placidia restored to Honorius. Treaty between Goths and Romans . . . . .	836
	Miserable condition of Spain . . . . .	836
417	Conclusion of history of Orosius . . . . .	837
	Glance at subsequent history of the Visigoths . . . . .	838
	Marriage of Constantius and Placidia. Their children . . . . .	840
	Attalus taken prisoner, mutilated and exiled . . . . .	841
	Triumph of Honorius. Prosperity of Rome . . . . .	842
421	Constantius associated in the Empire. His death . . . . .	843
	Strange conduct of Honorius . . . . .	844
423	Placidia retires to Constantinople. Death of Honorius . . . . .	844
	Joannes proclaimed Emperor . . . . .	845
424	Theodosius II sends an expedition against Joannes under command of Ardaburius and Aspar . . . . .	847
425	Deposition of Joannes. Valentinian III Emperor . . . . .	848
	Note K. Usurpers in the Western Empire during the reign of Honorius . . . . .	849

## CHAPTER XIX.

### PLACIDIA AUGUSTA.

	Authorities. Historia Miscella . . . . .	850-851
425-450	Placidia rules the Western Empire for a quarter of a century . . . . .	851
	Description of Ravenna, her capital . . . . .	851-855
	Mosaics of Ravenna . . . . .	856-857
	Apollinaris Sidonius on Ravenna . . . . .	859-861
	Ecclesiastical traditions of Ravenna . . . . .	862

A. D.		PAGE
	Lives of the Bishops by Agnellus . . . . .	863
	Bishop Severus . . . . .	864-866
	Joannes Angeloptes and Petrus Chrysologus . . . . .	867
	Placidia's Church of St. John the Evangelist . . . . .	868-870
	Otho's ecclesiastical traditions about Placidia's family . . . . .	870
	Rivalry of Aetius and Bonifacius . . . . .	871
	Early career of Bonifacius . . . . .	872-874
	Of Aetius . . . . .	874-875
428	Plot of Aetius against Bonifacius. Bonifacius calls in the Vandals . . . . .	877
432	Return of Bonifacius to Italy. He is slain by Aetius . . . . .	878
433-450	Aetius, chief minister of Placidia for seventeen years . . . . .	879
437	Marriage of Valentinian III to Eudoxia . . . . .	881
	Political aspect of Placidia's reign . . . . .	881
	Great fortunes of some Roman nobles . . . . .	883
	Ecclesiastical aspect of Placidia's reign. Monophysite controversy . . . . .	884
450	Her death . . . . .	886
	Mausoleum of Placidia . . . . .	887
	Her cremation (1577) . . . . .	888
	Note L. Bonifacius and Aetius (discussion of Prof. Freeman's article on 'The Procopian Legend') . . . . .	889-898
	Note M. Bishops and Churches of Ravenna . . . . .	899-917

## CHAPTER XX.

## SALVIAN ON THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

	Life of St. Salvian, Presbyter of Marseilles . . . . .	918
	He attributes the fall of the Empire to the vices of the Romans . . . . .	920
	He rates the moral character of the barbarians above that of the Romans . . . . .	921
	But depicts the special vices of the barbarians . . . . .	922
	Profanity of the Gaulish provincials . . . . .	923
	Salvian's pictures of Roman society . . . . .	924
	The <i>Conventus</i> . . . . .	925
	Extortions of the tax-gatherers . . . . .	925
	Romans driven to take refuge in barbarian lands . . . . .	926
	Downward steps in the course of a provincial yeoman: <i>Dedititius, Colonus, Servus</i> . . . . .	927

# Contents.

XV

A. D.

	PAGE
Cruel treatment of slaves . . . . .	928
Calamities and punishment of Trier . . . . .	929-930
Magnificence and wickedness of Carthage . . . . .	931-932
The Vandal purge . . . . .	932
Rome fell because she had lost the Aryan traditions of family purity: the Teutons rose because they had preserved them . . . . .	933

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC., VOL. I. PART II.

Map to illustrate the Battle of the River Frigidus . . . . .	To face page 569
Map of Italy at the Commencement of the Fifth Century . . . . .	„ page 623
Medallion of Priscus Attalus (Plate IV) . . . . .	„ page 785
Bas-Relief from the Tympanum of S. Giovanni Evangelista at Ravenna . . . . .	„ page 867

## CORRIGENDA

(Supplied by Mr. G. McN. Rushforth).

Page 421, note 2. This passage is explained by O. Seeck in the Introduction to his edition of Symmachus ('*Monumenta Antiquissima*'), p. liii, of the confiscation by Gratian in 382 of the temple revenues (see p. 398, and cf. *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 10. 20), and their appropriation, partly by the *Fiscus*, partly by the Imperial postal service ('*cursus publicus*'). It is the latter which is here meant by '*merces vilium bajulorum*.' For *bajulus* = *tabellarius* cf. *Ammian. Marc.* 28. 1. 33. Cf. *Ambrosii Ep.* 1. 17. 3: '*miror quomodo aliquibus in spem venerit quod debeas ad usus sacrificiorum profanorum praebere sumptum; quod enim jam dudum vel fisco vel arcae est vindicatum de tuo magis conferre videre quam de suo reddere*' (where the '*arca*' is that of the *Praefectus Praetorii* who at this time had charge of the '*cursus publicus*'). The allusion intended in '*trapezitae*' is not clear. Perhaps it means the Imperial Government as the guardian or trustee of the endowments. The passage would then read thus:—This endowment remained intact until the days of (the present) degenerate custodians of it, who &c.

P. 453, note 2. The forest of Andethanum must have been in the neighbourhood of the *Vicus Andethannalis*, mentioned by the Antonine Itinerary. Its site is to be looked for in the modern Duchy of Luxembourg, about half-way between Trier and Arlon.

P. 599, l. 2 from top, '*God Tiberius . . . God Commodus.*' Tiberius was never deified, and is therefore never styled '*divus*.' Commodus was not deified until after the accession of Septimius Severus.

P. 785, l. 5 from top. For '*Praetorian Prefect of the City*' read '*Prefect of the City.*'

P. 830, second marginal note, for '*son*' read '*brother.*'

P. 908, l. 14 from top, '*after the protestation (!)*'; i.e. the Creed.

P. 909, l. 10, '*ligarii (?)*.' Or *ligaria*. See Du Cange. Apparently the word is only found here, and seems to mean '*papers bound together*,' '*a note-book*,' from '*ligare*' to bind.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### MAXIMUS AND AMBROSE.

#### Authorities.

##### *Sources :—*

FOR most of the ecclesiastical events recorded in this Chapter, BOOK I.  
CH. 8. we have valuable contemporary evidence in the letters of AMBROSE, especially Letter 24, containing the report of his embassies to Maximus, 20 (to his sister), describing the struggle with Justina, and 17 and 18, arguing the question as to the demolition of the Altar of Victory. On the other side of the latter controversy we have the *Relatio* of SYMMACHUS. The edition of the letters and speeches of Symmachus, by Otto Seeck in the *Auctores Antiquissimi* (a portion of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*), is a monument of patient and accurate research.

For the persecution of the Priscillianists, and the life of St. Martin, the chief authority is SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, an ecclesiastical historian of Aquitaine (*circa* 353-429). His Latin style is much above the average of the writers of his age, and though himself orthodox, he is able to speak of heretics with fairness, and abhors sanguinary persecution.

For the civil events of the period our chief authority (and a very unsatisfactory one) is the Panegyric on Theodosius, pronounced in his presence at Rome (389) by PACATUS, which has been already described (p. 281). ZOSIMUS and the ecclesiastical historians supply the remainder of our information.

##### *Guides :—*

*Richter*, *Das West-römische Reich*, which ends with the fall of Maximus, is particularly helpful for all this period. The

BOOK I. great work of Cardinal *Baronius*, '*Annales Ecclesiastici*,' is  
 CH. 8. very useful here, where the affairs of Church and State are so closely blended. *Tillemont*, in his '*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique*,' gives us a very good '*Mémoire*' on the Priscillianists, but the division between the history of the Emperors and the history of the Church operates rather disadvantageously on this part of his work.

Fate of  
 two of  
 Gratian's  
 followers.

THE short but eventful life of Gratian had ended in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and Magnus Maximus the Spaniard, 'a man worthy of the purple if he had not broken his plighted oath in order to obtain it <sup>1</sup>,' ruled the three Western countries of Europe from the Cheviots to the Straits of Gibraltar, and Morocco as far as the slopes of the Atlas. After the murder of Gratian there does not seem to have been any extensive proscription of his friends. Merobaudes, who held the high dignity of Consul in the very year of his master's ruin, was compelled to put himself to death <sup>2</sup>. Count Vallio, a man of great renown as a warrior, saw his house surrounded by some of the British soldiers of the usurper. They twisted a cord round his neck and hung him, and then spread abroad the rumour that he had perished by his own hands, and had chosen 'this womanly form of death,' a fiction which imposed upon none who knew the stout old soldier as 'ever a lover of the steel blade,' and who were persuaded that had his death been self-sought the sword, not the halter, would have been its

<sup>1</sup> Orosius, vii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> '*Vita sese abdicare compulsus est*' (*Pacatus*, xxviii). *Tillemont* seems justified in vindicating the memory of Merobaudes from the charge of treason to his master, apparently brought against him by *Prosper*: '*Gratianus Parisiis Merobaudis magistri militum proditione superatus*,' a charge which is perhaps due to a corruption of *Prosper's* text.

instrument. After these two deaths capital punishment of the adherents of the lost cause seems to have ceased; and now began between the Imperial Courts the game of mutual menace and intrigue, to decide whether Maximus should add Italy and Africa to his dominions, or should lose the Gauls, which he had won with scarce a sword-stroke.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
383.

There was of course consternation as well as grief in the palace at Milan when the boy-Emperor, his mother, and their faithful adviser, Bauto the Frank, heard of the death of Gratian, and conjectured that soon the great and warlike army of the West would be marching southward to sweep the dynasty of Valentinian from the earth. The common danger drew the Arian Empress and the orthodox Bishop of Milan together. While Bauto sent soldiers to guard the passes of the Alps, Ambrose generously undertook the labours and discomforts of an embassy to the Court of the usurper to plead for peace, a hard and humiliating commission truly for the polished and eloquent ex-governor of Liguria to have to stand as a suppliant before the upstart Spanish boor, who had wrapped himself in the Imperial purple, and to receive the kiss of peace from the brutal lips which had ordered the murder of his own dearly-loved pupil, Gratian.

Ambrose  
sent as am-  
bassador  
from Milan  
to Trier.

Instead of being admitted, as his rank and character gave him a right to expect that he would be, into the *secretum* of the new Emperor, Ambrose was received in full consistory, courteously but coldly, and told to declare his errand. He asked for the return of the dead body of the murdered Emperor: this was firmly denied. He expressed the willingness of Valentinian and his mother that there should be peace: this was

Ambrose's  
interview  
with  
Maximus.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

383-4

made in some measure dependent on the answer to be brought back by Count Victor, an envoy whom Maximus had despatched to the Court of Milan. Then the usurper took up the discourse, and strongly urged that the child-Emperor should come himself and consult with him 'as with a father' concerning the welfare of the State. But hardly by such an easy crime as the murder or imprisonment of a confiding child was Maximus to gain a second share of the mighty heritage. Ambrose remarked that he had no authority to treat concerning the visit of Valentinian, but only concerning peace, nor did it seem reasonable that in that bitter winter weather, a little boy with his widowed mother should cross the Alps to seek an interview with a hardy soldier.

The embassy led to no immediate result. Ambrose waited in Gaul for Victor's return, passing the winter at Trier, but refusing all approach to intimacy on the part of Maximus<sup>1</sup>. The invasion of Italy, if ever seriously thought of by the usurper, was postponed for the present—probably Count Bauto's soldiers, garrisoning the passes, interposed a serious obstacle—and meanwhile all eyes were turned towards the East, where lay the true key of the position; and that key was in the hands of Theodosius.

Associa-  
tion of  
Arcadius  
in the  
Empire,  
16 or 19  
Jan. 383.

The Eastern Emperor had in the beginning of the year associated with himself as Augustus his little six year old son Arcadius, thus following the example of Valentinian in his association of Gratian. In fact, from this time forward this device for turning an elec-

<sup>1</sup> The first and second embassies of Ambrose to Maximus are both described in a letter of his to Valentinian (Ep. xxiv. p. 888), but it is not easy to disentangle the two.

tive into a hereditary monarchy became almost the rule in the Roman state. Eight months after the soldiers had acclaimed 'Arcadius Augustus,' came the terrible news of the dethronement, the captivity, the death of Gratian. We can well believe that it was with somewhat mingled emotions that Theodosius heard the tidings. His benefactor and his colleague had fallen, the victim of calumny and foul treason, and Theodosius might feel himself called upon by the loud voices of gratitude and honour to avenge his death. On the other hand, the house of Valentinian had done grievous wrong on that melancholy day at Carthage to the house of Theodosius, and the ruin of the Illyrian dynasty by a Spanish usurper might seem heaven's chastisement for the unjust execution of the Spanish general. The effect of the recent revolution was to give Theodosius increased rank and precedence in the Imperial partnership, in some degree to smooth the way for the eventual appropriation of the sovereignty of the universe as the appanage of his family. These were the ignoble arguments dissuading Theodosius from avenging the blood that had been shed in the banquet-hall at Lyons ; but there were others on the same side more worthy of being listened to and obeyed by a Roman Emperor. Thrace and Moesia needed rest after the long agony of the Gothic campaigns. The Persian king was beginning to move uneasily on the other side of the Euphrates. The Saracens—some tribe known by that indefinite appellation—had appeared in arms on the south-east corner of the Euxine. The Ephthalite Huns were invading Mesopotamia, and had reached Edessa. Perhaps, too, within the limits of the Empire itself, the stern edicts against Arianism

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

383.

Theodosius  
receives the  
news of  
Gratian's  
murder.



BOOK I. were not being enforced without trouble and commotion.  
 CH. 8.  
 383-4 All these considerations seemed to counsel peace, and a courteous reception of the ambassador whom Maximus sent, about the end of 383 or the beginning of 384, to the Court of Constantinople.

Embassy of  
 Maximus  
 to Theo-  
 dosius.

The envoy of Maximus was his Grand Chamberlain<sup>1</sup>, an old and trusty comrade of the Emperor, contrasting favourably with the eunuchs<sup>1</sup> who, since the days of Constantius, had generally held the office of Chamberlain in the Eastern Court. The message which he bore was no humble deprecation of the Eastern Emperor's anger. Maximus tendered no apology for Gratian's murder (the guilt of which he probably threw off on over-zealous subordinates), but he offered to Theodosius firm friendship, and an alliance offensive and defensive against all the enemies of the Roman name. This, if he were willing to accept it; if not, hatred and war to the bitter end. Theodosius listened to the ambassador; and moved by some or all of the considerations which have been referred to, accepted openly the proffered alliance, though perhaps in his secret heart only postponing the day of vengeance.

Maximus  
 recognised  
 as legiti-  
 mate Em-  
 peror.

It was agreed that the name of Maximus should be mentioned in the edicts of the Emperors, and that his statues should be erected side by side with those of the already recognised Augusti, throughout the Empire. Cynegius, the Praetorian Prefect, who was just starting on a mission to Egypt, in order to close all the temples that were dedicated to heathen

<sup>1</sup> Ὁ τοὺς βασιλικοὺς φυλάττειν ἐπιτεταγμένος κοιτῶνας (Zosimus, iv. 37): the equivalent no doubt of 'Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi.' Zosimus is the only authority who mentions this important embassy.

worship, received an additional charge to raise a statue to Maximus in the city of Alexandria, and to make a formal harangue to the citizens, announcing that he was received as full partner in the Empire <sup>1</sup>.

Whether formally stated or not, it was evidently one of the conditions of the peace thus arranged between Theodosius and Maximus, that the boy Valentinian should be left in the undisturbed possession of Italy and Africa. From this time forward Theodosius assumed towards the young prince that position of elder brother, counsellor, and friend, which had been hitherto held by Gratian. The relation was indeed complicated by theological differences, Justina being as keen in her partisanship for the Arians, as Theodosius was resolute in his defence of orthodoxy, but in the end it might safely be predicted that in all important matters Constantinople would give the law to Milan.

Such scanty details as we possess concerning the character of Maximus as a civil ruler, will be best reserved for the close of his five years' reign. It happens that the events by which the attention of men was most attracted during this time were ecclesiastical

<sup>1</sup> It does not seem possible to reconcile the language of the historians with any actual hostile movement of Theodosius against Maximus in 383, much less with one which should have gone as far as Gaul. Yet what else can be the meaning of these words of Themistius (Or. xviii. p. 220)? *Ὅσα που ἡ πρώτη ἦν ἐγκράτειά [ἐκστρατεία] τε καὶ ὁρμή ἐπὶ τὸν Ῥῆνον* ἔργον μὲν αὐτῇ οὐκ ἠκολούθησεν ἐμφανὲς τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἡ δὲ διάνοια δὲ ἡ ὑπερήφανος καὶ βασιλική, τιμωρῆσαι τῷ ἀρχηγέτῃ πρὸ ὥρας ἀνηρπασμένῳ, καὶ τὸ λείψανον ἐκείνης περισώσαι τῆς γενεᾶς. Themistius goes on to say that by the very intention the audacity of the Western Emperor was repressed, even as Achilles' shout frightened back the Trojan host. This probably shows in how very rhetorical a sense we must understand *ὁρμή ἐπὶ τὸν Ῥῆνον*.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

rather than political. They related to the conflict between old and new religions, the struggle of the priest for supremacy, the unsheathing of the sword of the civil ruler for the extirpation of religious error, rather than to the march of armies, or the invasions of barbarians. In almost all of these debates Ambrose took a conspicuous part, and it may safely be said that in the minds of contemporaries as of posterity, the figures of the coarse soldier-Emperor of the Gauls and the boy-Emperor of Italy, were dwarfed beside the mighty personality of the eloquent Bishop of Milan.

Renewal of  
the discus-  
sion about  
the Altar  
of Victory.

Scarcely had the excitement caused by the news of the death of Gratian subsided, when the heathen party in the Roman Senate began to agitate for the repeal of his legislation against the old faith of Rome, and for the replacement of the Altar of Victory in the Senate-house. Not unnaturally they pointed to the untimely end of the young enemy of the gods as a proof that the deities of the Capitol were still mighty to avenge their wrongs, and to add emphasis to this argument, they reminded the listeners of the dwindled crops which had been reaped throughout Italy in the summer after the impious edicts had been passed.

Leaders of  
the heathen  
party.

The chief advocates of the old religion in the Senate were the two men who in the year 384 held the highest civil offices in Italy, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, Praetorian Prefect of Italy, and Q. Aurelius Symmachus, Prefect of the City of Rome. We have met with the former official in the reign of Valentinian interposing successfully to save some of

Praetex-  
tatus.

‘The fair humanities of old religion,’  
for the Nature-worshipping sons of Hellas<sup>1</sup>. He was

<sup>1</sup> See p. 202.

a fine specimen of the heathen Senators of Rome<sup>1</sup>,  
a man able to rule with firmness yet without undue  
severity, honest and upright, and not without a plea-  
sant vein of humour, which he often showed in cheer-  
ful banter with Pope Damasus. An Illustrious Pre-  
fect might still please rather than offend the Bishop of  
Rome by condescending to banter with him. 'Yes,  
truly, oh Damasus,' said he, 'I too will become a  
Christian if you will make me Pope.' So much had  
Praetextatus seen in his official career of the power  
and splendour which now surrounded the chair of  
St. Peter, and so keen was the competition between  
rival claimants for its possession, a competition which  
in the disputed election of Damasus and Ursinus led  
to riot and bloodshed in the streets, and the very  
churches of Rome. Praetextatus was named as Consul  
for the year 385, but died before he had assumed the  
Consular robe, in the midst of the discussion which is  
about to be described.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

384.

366-367.

Much fuller ought to be our information concerning  
Symmachus, the other champion of the religion of  
Jupiter. This high official of the Empire, Proconsul,  
Prefect, Consul, an orator and a historian, of high  
birth, vast wealth, and untarnished character, has left  
about 950 letters, many of them addressed to the chief  
statesmen and authors of the day. These letters ought  
to be a mine of information as to the social life of  
Rome in the fifth century: they should reveal to us  
the inmost thoughts of the dying Paganism of the  
Empire: they should help us to understand how the  
last men of that antediluvian world looked upon the

Sym-  
machus.

<sup>1</sup> See his character in Ammianus Marcellinus, xxvii. 9. 8.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

wild barbarian flood which was everywhere rising around them. Unhappily for us, though there are some grains of gold in this correspondence, they are scanty and widely scattered. It would perhaps not be too much to say, that half of them are filled with excuses for not writing earlier or oftener to his correspondents. The word which perpetually rises to the lips of the impatient reader as he turns over page after page of the letters of Symmachus is 'vapid.' It is in comparing the utter moral sterility of the correspondence of this most respectable and on the whole amiable Pagan with

‘The questings and the guessings  
Of the soul’s own soul within’<sup>1</sup>,

revealed to us in the marvellous ‘Confessions’ of his young contemporary and fellow-orator, Augustine, that we feel most strongly why Paganism was bound to die, and why Christianity was sure to succeed to its vacant inheritance.

Relatio of  
Sym-  
machus.

384-5.

The least uninteresting part of the correspondence of Symmachus is the tenth book, which consists chiefly of the *Relationes* or Official Reports to the Emperors, made during his tenure of office as Prefect of the city. The most celebrated of these Reports is that in which he pleads the cause of the dismantled Altar of Victory. The Report is addressed to our ‘Lords Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius ever August’<sup>2</sup>. They are approached with every epithet of deferential homage. They are ‘the glory of our times,’ and ‘my renowned Princes’: they are addressed as ‘Your Clemency,’ and

<sup>1</sup> Poems by A. H. Clough.

<sup>2</sup> ‘DDDNNN Valentiniano Theodosio et Arcadio semper AVGGG,’ a letter for each Emperor.



‘Your Eternity’; but when Rome herself is personified as appearing before them pleading her grey hairs as a reason why she should be exempted from insult, and begs ‘these best of Princes, these Fathers of the Republic,’ to reverence her years, it seems hard not to suppose that some feeling of the inappropriateness of the designation must have crossed the soul of the orator. For, of these renowned Princes and Fathers of the State, one indeed was a stout soldier of thirty-eight, but the others were a boy of thirteen<sup>1</sup> and a little child of seven<sup>2</sup>, strange recipients of the solemn compliments of the elderly Senator. The most eloquent passage in the Report is the following paragraph in which Rome personified makes her appeal :

‘Reverence my many years, to which I have attained by these holy rites; let me use these ancestral ceremonies, for I have no desire to change them. Let me live after my own manner, for I am free. It is this worship which has brought the whole world under my sway; it was these sacrifices which repelled Hannibal from my walls, the Gaulish host from the rock of the Capitol. Have I been preserved through all these centuries only that I should now be insulted in my old age?’ Then, dropping the figure of suppliant Rome, the orator pleads for toleration on broader and more philosophical grounds : ‘We ask for a quiet life, for the indigenous gods, the gods of our fatherland. It is right to believe that that which all men worship is *the One*. We look forth upon the same stars, the sky above us is common to us all, the same universe encloses us. What matters it by what exact method each one seeks for Truth? It

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
—  
384.

<sup>1</sup> Valentinian II.

<sup>2</sup> Arcadius.

BOOK I. is not by one road only that you will arrive at that so  
 CH. 8. mighty Secret.'

384.

The confiscation  
 of the  
 revenues of  
 the Vestal  
 Virgins.

Arguments more personal to the Emperors are dwelt on at some length. It is for their interest that the sanctity of the oath should be upheld ; but who will have any fear of perjury now that the venerable altar on which the Senators were wont to swear is removed ? Then the orator passes on to another grievance, the withdrawal of the subsidies from the priestly Colleges and from the sisterhood of the Vestal Virgins. Here the excavations of recent years give a new emphasis to his words. Under the shadow of the Imperial Palatine, and within a few yards from the Arch of Titus, we have seen the long inviolate Atrium of the Vestals laid bare to view. The site of the innermost shrine, where in all probability the mysterious Palladium was guarded, the chambers of the six recluses, the round temple in which the eternal fire was preserved, the statues of two of the Virgins, one of whom, a woman of sweet and noble countenance, was the Vestalis Maxima, the Mother Superior of this heathen convent—all these recently disinterred relics of the past help us to reconstruct the life of dignified seclusion led by these women, who were chosen from among the noblest and most austere families in Rome for the guardianship of the sacred fire. What lends especial interest to this discovery is, that the statue of Vettius Agorius Prætextatus—the only male who even in sculptured semblance was suffered to enter that chaste abode—has been also found in the Atrium Vestæ. Both he and his wife, Fabia Aconia Paullina, were zealous patrons of the Vestals, who erected this statue in their hall to show forth their gratitude. As has been said, he

seems not to have lived to see the end of the controversy; possibly his indignation at the contempt poured on the holy maidens, may have hurried the old Senator to his grave<sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
—  
384.

The arguments employed by Symmachus in defence of his venerable clients, strongly resemble those which have been used in later ages by the orators who have deprecated the spoliation of convents. 'The ruler should be ashamed to eke out the poverty of his treasury by such unjust gains as these. The will of the "pious founder" should be respected. Who will have any confidence in bequeathing property to public objects if such clear and manifest testamentary dispositions as those by which the Vestals hold their funds are set aside? It is not true that they give no return for the revenues which they receive. They dedicate their bodies to chastity; they support the eternity of the Empire by the heavenly succours which they implore; they lend the friendly aid of their virtue to the arms and the eagles of your legions. You have taken the money of these holy maidens, the ministers of the gods, and bestowed it on degenerate money-changers<sup>2</sup>, who have squandered on the hire of miserable porters the endowments sacred to chastity. And well have you been punished, for the crops of whole provinces have failed, and vast populations have had to live, as the first race of men lived, on the acorns of Dodona.'

<sup>1</sup> For these details I am indebted to S. Lanciani's chapter on the Vestals, in his delightful book, 'Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries' (1889), to which I would refer for the inscription recording Praetextatus' devotion to the Vestals.

<sup>2</sup> 'Stetit muneris hujus integritas usque ad degeneres trapezitas, qui ad mercedem vilium bajulorum sacra castitatis alimenta verterunt.' I am unable to explain the allusion.

BOOK I. 'Finally,' says the orator, 'do not be ensnared by the  
CH. 8.  
 —————  
384. argument that because you are Christians, it is your duty to withhold pecuniary support from every faith but your own. It is not really *you* who give these allowances to the Virgins. The dedication of the funds took place long ago, and all that you are asked to do is to respect as rulers the rights of private property. Your late brother Gratian erred through ignorance, for the evil counsellors who surrounded him would not suffer him to hear of the Senate's disapprobation of his proceedings; but now that you are fully informed, we call upon you with confidence to remedy that which has been unjustly ordered.' So, without any more distinct allusion to the fate of Gratian, ends the *Relatio* of Symmachus.

Letters of  
 Ambrose.

The Bishop of Milan had heard some rumour of the renewed attempts of the heathen party, and must have feared that through the weakness of Justina, or the policy of Bauto, they were likely to prove successful. He addressed 'to the most blessed Prince and most Christian Emperor Valentinian' a letter, not so much of counsel as of menace, denouncing the wrath of God and of all Christian Bishops if the petitions of the Senators were complied with. He demanded a copy of the *Relatio*, that he might reply to it. He insisted that in this, as in other matters, Valentinian should seek the advice of his 'father' Theodosius. He declared that if, without waiting for his own advice and that of Theodosius, the Emperor allowed the altar to be restored, 'the Bishops would not be able calmly to accept the fact, and to dissimulate their indignation. You may come to church if you please, but you will find no priests there, or only priests who resist your

entrance, and scornfully refuse your gifts, tainted with idolatry.' The whole tone of the letter, addressed as it is by a mature man of the world, and dignitary of the Church, to a helpless boy on whom an evil fate has laid the burden of an empire, is harsh and ungenerous; and with rulers of a high spirit it would probably have brought about the very concession to the opposite party which he desired to avert. But Ambrose probably knew well the natures with which he had to deal, and felt that in any case the appeal to Theodosius would ensure the obedience of the young Prince and his advisers. The *Relatio* was sent to the Bishop, and he replied to it in a long letter, less fiery but much duller than that which he had first written. There is no need to go point by point through his reply to the arguments of Symmachus. Perhaps his best parry is that which he makes to the allegation that the gods of the elder faith had saved Rome from Hannibal, and the Capitol from the Gauls. 'Indeed! Yet Hannibal came close up to the walls of the city, and long insulted it by the presence of his army in its neighbourhood. Why did the gods suffer that, if they were so mighty? And the Gauls, as we have always heard, were repelled not by divine aid, but by the cackling of the geese of the Capitol. Pray did Jupiter Capitolinus speak through the goose's gullet?'

But whatever might be the faults of taste, or the deficiencies of argument in St. Ambrose's letters, they produced the desired effect on the mind of the young Emperor and his mother. When the deputation from the Senate<sup>1</sup> preferred their request to the Imperial

Valentinian refuses to replace the Altar.

<sup>1</sup> 'Miserat propter recuperanda templorum jura, sacerdotiorum profana privilegia, cultus sacrorum suorum, Roma legatos: et, quod est



BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

384.

Consistory, all the members of that body, Christians as well as Pagans, gave their vote for the restoration of the altar and the priestly revenues. Valentinian alone (so we are assured) opposed the prevailing current. His one stock argument was, 'Why should I restore what my brother took away? I should thus injure the memory of my brother as well as the cause of religion, and I do not wish to be surpassed in piety by him.' Then the politic ministers suggested that he might follow the example of his father, who had left the altar untouched. 'No,' said the boy, 'the cases are not parallel. My father did not remove the altar: neither am I removing anything. But there was nothing to restore, and he did not restore aught: neither will I restore it. Both my father and my brother were Augusti, and as far as may be I will follow the example of both, but if there be anything to choose I will rather be an imitator of my brother than of my father. Let our great Mother Rome ask anything else that she may desire. I owe a duty to her, but I owe a yet heavier duty to the Author of our Salvation.'

Whether he spoke his own opinions, or those which had been instilled into him by his mother, it must be admitted that the youthful wearer of the purple showed some trace of Caesarian dignity and self-possession in the manner in which he imposed his will (even if it were in truth the will of Ambrose) on the grey-headed soldiers and ministers of State who stood around his throne. The discussion was at an end. Symmachus

*gravius Senatus nomine nitebantur*' (De Obitu Valentiniani, 19). There was therefore an embassy from the Senate besides the *Relatio* of Symmachus.

was defeated. The Altar and Statue of Victory were left in some dusty hiding-place<sup>1</sup>, from which they have probably been long ago drawn forth to feed the insatiable lime-kilns of Rome; and the Vestal Virgins, pacing up and down their stately Atrium, and looking with wistful faces on the statue of the friendly Prætextatus, bewailed the decay of their fortunes, and looked forward with well-grounded fear to the impending extinction of their order.

The hand of Ambrose, so heavy in this affair on the party of heathenism in Rome, was next to be felt pressing with equal weight on the Arian Empress at Milan. When Justina had somewhat recovered from the first terror of the threatened invasion of Maximus, and felt the support of Ambrose less necessary to the safety of her son's throne, she began once more to urge the claims of the Arians to some measure of toleration. Milan had been, not many years ago, pretty evenly divided between the Arians and the maintainers of the Nicene Creed; many of the courtiers still professed the faith which Justina's example rendered fashionable; the Gothic troops, of whom there was a large number in the Imperial city, perhaps sent by Theodosius for the defence of his young colleague, followed as a matter of course the Arian (or at least the Homœan) standard, which had been raised among them by the venerable Ulphilas. It was not perhaps unreasonable, in these circumstances, to ask that one out of the many Basilicas of Milan should be handed over to the Empress and her co-religionists, that they might there celebrate with the rites of an Arian communion the Easter of 385. To us, with our ideas of religious toleration, Ambrose's

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

384.

Justina  
claims a  
Basilica at  
Milan for  
the Arians.

385.

<sup>1</sup> Except during the short heathen interregnum of Eugenius.

BOOK I. stubborn refusal to comply with Justina's request  
 CH. 8. savours of priestly intolerance. On the other hand,  
 385. we must remember that the Nicene faith was only just emerging from a life and death struggle with Arianism, which certainly had shown little tolerance or liberality in its hour of triumph; that under Constantius and Valens the eunuch-chamberlains of the Courts, playing on the fretful vanity of theologising Emperors, had wrought unspeakable mischief to the cause of Christianity; that Ambrose had the voice of the multitude with him, and all that was most living in the Church on his side; that if the faith of Christendom was not absolutely to die of the logomachy which Arius had commenced in the baths and *fora* of Alexandria, it was perhaps necessary that the sentence of the Fathers of Nicaea should be accepted as the closing word in the controversy.

Ambrose  
 refuses to  
 comply.

But more than the theological propositions of Arius and Athanasius was at issue in the contest. The whole question of the relations between the Spiritual and Temporal powers, a question which was logically bound to arise as soon as a Roman Augustus sought admission into the Christian Church, but which had been perhaps somewhat shirked both by Constantine and his Bishops, now began to demand a logical answer. Valentinian II. (or his mother Justina for him) said virtually, 'All the edifices for the public worship of the Almighty belong to me as head of the Roman Republic. In my clemency I leave to the Nicenes all the other Basilicas in Mediolanum, but I claim this one for myself and those who hold with me to worship in.' Such was the theory by virtue of which Gratian and Theodosius had actually wrested multitudes of churches, both in Italy and in Thrace, from

the Arian communion, and had handed them over to Bishops like-minded with Gregory and Ambrose; and such was also the theory on which Valentinian himself, acting under Ambrose's advice, had just been confirming the confiscation of the revenues of the Vestal Virgins and the priests of Jupiter<sup>1</sup>. But not deterred by any logical difficulty of this sort, the uncompromising Bishop of Milan said, 'Let the Emperor take my private property, I offer no resistance. Let him take my life, I gladly offer it for the safety of my flock. But the churches of this city are God's, and neither I nor any one else can or shall surrender one of them to the Emperor to be polluted by the worship of the Arians.' It is clear that we have here already formulated the whole question by which the Middle Ages were tormented, under the name of the question of Investitures. Ambrose opens the pleadings which Anselm, Hildebrand, Becket, Innocent will urge, through long centuries, with all the energy that is in them. Nor can it be said that either the Middle Ages, or the ages that have followed them, have truly solved the problem. Perhaps the formula of Ricasoli, '*Libera Chiesa in libero Stato*,' may prove to be at least one root of the difficult equation. But at any rate it is clear that in the Fifth Century after Christ men's minds were not yet ripe for this solution.

The first request, or demand, made by the Court party was that the Porcian Basilica, which was in the suburbs of Milan, should be handed over for Arian worship. This was refused: then 'the new Basilica,' a larger building within the walls, was demanded. The populace began to show signs of irritation: and the 'Counts of the Consistory,' in other words, the Cabinet Ministers of the

The  
Porcian  
Basilica  
seized.

<sup>1</sup> Well brought out by Richter, p. 607.

BOOK I. Emperor, falling back on their old position, entreated  
 CH. 8. Ambrose to use his influence with his flock to secure  
 385. the peaceable surrender of the Porcian Basilica, which, as being outside the walls, might be given up without admitting the Arians to full equality with the orthodox party. This, however, the Bishop stedfastly refused to do. On the following day, which was Palm Sunday, while Ambrose was administering the Communion, tidings came that the servants of the Palace<sup>1</sup> were hanging round the Porcian Basilica the strips of purple cloth, which (like the Broad Arrow on a Bonded Warehouse in England) implied that it was the property of the Sovereign. At these tidings the Catholic population of Milan grew frantic with rage. A certain Castulus, who was pointed at as an Arian, was seized in the great square by an angry mob, and was haled violently through the streets of the city. With genuine earnestness Ambrose prayed that no blood might be shed in the cause of Christ, and by a deputation of priests and deacons, rescued Castulus from the hands of the mob.

The merchants in favour of Ambrose.

It was not, however, only the lower orders who sympathised with the eloquent Bishop. The merchants of Milan made some manifestation in his favour, which was met by the Court party with sentences of fine and imprisonment. 'The gaols,' says Ambrose, doubtless with some exaggeration, 'were full of merchants,' and the fine imposed on their guild was 200 lbs. of gold (£8,000), to be paid within three days. They answered that they would gladly pay twice or thrice that amount

<sup>1</sup> Decani, apparently one of the lowest orders of civil servants, subordinate to the 'Agentes in rebus' (Cod. Theod. vi. 33, and Gothofred's note).



if only they might keep their faith untainted. At the same time, so little dependance could the government place on the loyalty of its own subordinates, that the whole throng of Court messengers, and what we should call sheriff's officers, were ordered to suspend for a time the execution of civil process, in order to withdraw them from the streets, and prevent their mingling with the mob <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
385.

The next step taken by the Court was to send a band of soldiers to occupy the church. The tension of men's minds was growing tighter, and Ambrose tells us that he began to fear that there would be bloodshed and perhaps civil war. His national pride as a Roman, as well as his pride of orthodoxy, was wounded by the proceedings of the Empress, for the officers, probably many of the privates in the detachment of troops by which the church was garrisoned, were Arian Goths. 'Wherever that woman [the Empress] goes,' he said, in writing to his sister, 'she drags about with her a train of followers, who dare not shew themselves in the streets alone. These Goths used to live in waggons: now they are making our church into their waggon and their home.' To the Gothic officers who came to exhort him to yield obedience to the Emperor, and to persuade the people to acquiesce in the surrender of the Basilica, he said, angrily, 'Was it for this that the Roman State received you into its bosom, that you should make yourselves the ministers of public discord? Whither will you go next when you have ruined Italy?'

Gothic  
soldiers  
in the  
Church.

<sup>1</sup> I think this, which is Richter's explanation, must be the interpretation of 'Palatina omnia officia . . . temperare a processu jubentur, specie qua seditioni interesse prohibebantur' (Ambrose, Epist. I. xx. p. 854).

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
— — —  
385.

In such scenes the days of Holy Week wore on. Ambrose spent all day in the great Basilica, preaching, exhorting, receiving conciliatory messages from the Court, and returning answers of haughty defiance. The Gothic soldiers lived in the Porcian Basilica 'as in a waggon,' surrounded by a weeping, groaning, excited multitude. A crowd also assembled in the 'new' intramural Basilica, and there, apparently on Maundy Thursday, occurred one of the most exciting scenes of the drama. Some soldiers appeared in the sacred building. They were known to be of those who had occupied the Porcian Basilica, and it was believed that they had come for bloodshed. The women-worshippers raised an outcry, and one rushed out of the church. It was soon seen, however, that the soldiers were come, not for fighting, but for prayer. Ambrose had sent a deputation of Presbyters to warn them that if they continued to occupy the Porcian Basilica for the Emperor, he should exclude them from the ceremonies of the Church; and, terrified by the threat, they had come to make their peace with the orthodox party and to share in their worship. In fact—and this seems to have been the turning point of the crisis—the soldiers had deserted the Emperor and enlisted under the Bishop.

The great  
Sermon.

A great cry arose in the church for the presence of Ambrose, and he accordingly proceeded thither<sup>1</sup> and preached a sermon on the lesson for the day, which was contained in the Book of Job. He told his hearers that they had all imitated the patience of the patriarch of

<sup>1</sup> I think the narrative implies that the sermon was preached in the new Basilica; but Ambrose, with all his eloquence, tells his story very badly, and it is exceedingly difficult to understand the exact order of events. The point is one of no great importance.

Uz. As for himself, he too had been tempted, like Job, by a woman. ‘Ye see how many things are suddenly set in motion against us, Goths, arms, the Gentiles, the fine of the merchants, the punishment of the saints. Ye understand the meaning of the command “Hand over the Basilica;” that is, “Curse God, and die.”’ Am-  
 brose then proceeded to remark that all the worst temptations to which human nature is subject come through woman, and gently reminded them that Justina belonged to the same sex which had already produced an Eve for the ruin of mankind, a Jezebel, and an Herodias for the persecution of the Church. ‘Finally, I am thus commanded, “Surrender the Basilica.” I answer, “It is not lawful for me to surrender it, nor is it for thy advantage, oh Emperor, to receive it. By no right canst thou violate the house of a private man, and dost thou think that thou mayest take away the house of God?” It is alleged that all things are lawful for the Emperor, that he is master of the universe<sup>1</sup>. I answer, “Do not magnify thy power, oh Emperor, so as to think that thou hast any imperial power over the things which are divine. Do not lift thyself up, but if thou wishest for a long reign, be subject to God.” It is written “Render unto God the things which are God’s, and to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s.” Palaces belong to the Emperor, Churches to the Priest. To thee is committed the guardianship of public buildings, not of sacred ones. Again, we are told that the Emperor says, “I too ought to have one Basilica.” I answer “No, it is not lawful for thee to have that one. What hast thou to do with the adulteress? And an

<sup>1</sup> ‘Allegatur imperatori licere omnia, ipsius esse universa.’ The last words seem to correspond with ἡ τῶν ὅλων ἀρχή of Zosimus.

BOOK I.  
 CH. 8.  
 385.

BOOK I. adulteress is that Church which is not joined to Christ  
CH. 8. in lawful union.”’

385.

Again, there came a messenger from the Court, commanding Ambrose to yield to the Emperor's will, and calling him to account for the message which he had sent by the Presbyters to the Porcian Basilica. ‘If you are setting up for Emperor, let me know it plainly, that I may consider how to prepare myself against you <sup>1</sup>.’ Ambrose answered, somewhat ineptly, that Christ fled lest the people should make Him a king, and that it was commonly reported that Emperors coveted the Priesthood more than Priests coveted the Empire. He continued with more justice, ‘Maximus would not have said that there was any danger of my setting up as a rival to Valentinian, when he complained that it was my embassy which prevented his crossing over into Italy to rob Valentinian of his throne.’

‘All that day,’ says Ambrose, ‘was passed by us in sorrow: but the Imperial curtains were cut to pieces by boys at their play. I was unable to return home, because all round us were the soldiers who guarded the Basilica. We recited Psalms with our brethren in the Lesser <sup>2</sup> Basilica.’

Victory of  
Ambrose.

Next day, Good Friday, the battle was ended. Ambrose was preaching, again from the lesson for the day, which happened to be the Book of the prophet Jonah. Scarcely had he reached the words which told how, in God's compassion, the threatened destruction had been averted from the city of Nineveh, when news was brought that the soldiers had been ordered to depart

<sup>1</sup> ‘Si tyrannus es scire volo; ut sciam quemadmodum me adversus te praeparem.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘In ecclesiae basilica minore,’ perhaps the ‘new Basilica.’

from the Porcian Basilica, and that the fines of the merchants were remitted; in fact, that the Court party had surrendered the whole position. The soldiers themselves came emulously into the church to announce these joyful tidings; they rushed to the altars, they gave the kiss of peace to the worshippers. Thanks to God, and the eager plaudits of the multitude, resounded through the church. The suspense of the last terrible six days was over; the hated Arians were defeated; and Ambrose was triumphant.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
385.

As high, however, as was the exultation in the Basilica, so deep was the depression in the purple chambers of the Palace. The Counts of the Consistory besought the Emperor to go forth to the church, in order to give a visible token of his reconciliation with the orthodox party, and they represented that this petition was made at the request of the soldiers. The vexed and worried youth who called himself Augustus, fretfully answered, 'I believe you would hand me over bound to Ambrose, if such were his orders.' The eunuch Calligonus, who held the high office of 'Superintendent of the Sacred Cubicle,' said angrily to Ambrose, 'While I am alive dost thou dare to scorn Valentinian? I will take off thy head.' To whom Ambrose proudly answered, 'God may suffer thee to fulfil thy threats. Thou wilt do what eunuchs are wont to do [deeds of cruelty], and I shall suffer what Bishops suffer.'

Depression  
in the  
Palace.

It was a truce only, not a solid peace, which had been thus concluded between the diadem and the mitre; and in the following year (386) the dispute broke out afresh. An Arian priest, named Mercurinus, from the shores of the Black Sea, was brought to Milan,

The strife  
breaks out  
afresh.



BOOK I. took the venerated name of Auxentius, and was con-  
 Сн. 8. secrated as Bishop of the Arian community. On the  
 386. 23rd of January an edict was promulgated, bearing  
 as a matter of form the orthodox names of Theodosius  
 and Arcadius, as well as of Valentinian, but really  
 the sole work of the boy-monarch, or rather of his  
 mother. By this decree liberty of assembling was  
 granted 'to those who hold the doctrines put forth  
 by the Council of Ariminum, the doctrines which were  
 afterwards confirmed at Constantinople, and which shall  
 eternally endure.' 'Those who think that they are  
 to monopolise the right of public assembly' [that is,  
 of course, the Nicene party, and preeminently Ambrose]  
 'are warned that if they attempt anything against this  
 precept of Our Tranquillity, they will be treated as  
 movers of sedition, and capitally punished for their  
 offences against the peace of the Church and against  
 Our Imperial Majesty<sup>1</sup>.'

The reference to the Council of Ariminum, the only  
 one in which the orthodox party had been persuaded to  
 abandon the stronghold of the word 'Homoöusion,' the  
 Council after which, as St. Jerome said, 'The whole  
 world groaned in astonishment to find itself Arian<sup>2</sup>,'  
 was a clever, but shallow artifice. The day for such  
 attempts to bridge over the yawning chasm which  
 separated the Athanasian from the Arian had long  
 passed by. Meanwhile, however, it must be observed  
 in fairness to Justina and her ministers, that it was  
 toleration only, not supremacy, that they sought to  
 obtain for their co-religionists. In this very year a  
 letter went forth from the Emperor for the rebuilding

<sup>1</sup> Cod. Theod. xvi. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ingemuit totus orbis, et Arianum se esse miratus est.'

and enlargement of the stately Basilica of St. Paul outside of the Ostian gate of Rome, a Basilica which was in the hands of the Catholics and owned the sway of the orthodox Pope Damasus<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps we may say that the situation was not unlike that which prevailed in England in 1688. At Milan, as at Windsor, the sovereign, in the interests of a small and unpopular Church, strove to secure toleration by an exercise of his princely prerogative. In both countries the Edict of Toleration was profoundly disliked by the people: in Italy one Bishop, and in England seven Bishops, headed the popular opposition; and the tumults which followed, in one case shook, and in the other overturned, the throne of the monarch, who, whatever were his ulterior designs, fought under the standard of religious liberty.

The next step taken by Valentinian was to summon Ambrose to appear in the Consistory, there to conduct an argument with Auxentius on the points in controversy between them. The judges were to be laymen, perhaps an equal number chosen on either side, and the Emperor was to be the final umpire. The prize of this ecclesiastical wrestling-match was doubtless to be the episcopal throne of Milan. If Ambrose refused the summons he was, as a disobedient subject, at once to quit the country. In a letter full of splendid scorn Ambrose refused either to accept the challenge or to enter upon a life of exile. The Emperor was young yet. All his subjects prayed that he might one day attain to years of discretion: and he would then know how utterly unsuitable it was for laymen to judge in

Ambrose  
summoned  
to the  
Consistory.

<sup>1</sup> The letter is given by Baronius, s. a. 386, 30, 31. The road by the river Tiber was, with the Senate's consent, to be included in the new church-building. I owe this reference to Richter, p. 613.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

386.

matters relating to the Church. Not thus had the elder Valentinian acted, who had expressly left the decision as to all points of doctrine to ecclesiastics. As for Ambrose's bishopric, that was not in dispute; it had been conferred upon him by the unanimous voice of the people, and confirmed by Valentinian I., who had promised that he should have undisturbed possession of the dignity if he would, in spite of his reluctance, accept the office to which he had been chosen. For the judges who were to decide in this wonderful debate, Auxentius showed a prudent silence as to their names. Ambrose strongly suspected that if the day of the trial dawned, they would be found to be all Jews or heathens, who would equally delight to favour the Arian heretic by depreciating the divinity of Christ. The whole proceeding was of a piece with the recent Edict of the Emperor. 'The Edict is entirely in the interest of the Council of Ariminum. That Council I abhor: and I follow unflinchingly the decisions of the Council of Nicaea, from which neither death nor the sword shall ever separate me. This faith also the most blessed Emperor Theodosius, the colleague of your Clemency, follows and approves. This faith Gaul holds fast, this both the Hither and the Further Spain, and they will guard it safely in pious dependence on the Holy Spirit's help.'

Psalmody  
by day and  
night in  
the  
Basilica.

The immediate answer of the Court to this bold harangue of the Bishop's is not recorded. There does not seem any clear proof that the Empress either resorted, or intended to resort, to violence: but it was enough that a belief spread through the city that the next step would be the forcible removal of Ambrose. He took up his abode as before, or even more con-

tinuously, in the great Basilica, and a great multitude thronged its portals prepared to die with their Bishop. How long this strange blockade may have lasted we are not informed. The court seems to have abstained from the high-handed action to which it had resorted in the previous struggle and to have pursued a somewhat Fabian policy. Ambrose, perceiving that the spirits of his adherents were flagging, and that there was a danger of their giving up the strife from weariness, occupied their minds and braced their nerves by frequent psalmody. A poet as well as an orator, he expressed in beautiful words some of the aspirations of the human soul after God, and marrying them to simple, but sweet melody, bade his ecclesiastical garrison sing them antiphonically after the manner of the Eastern Church. A young African teacher of rhetoric named Augustine, who was at this time being strongly attracted to Christianity by the magnetic influence of Ambrose, has preserved to us two of the verses which he especially admired.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
386.

‘Deus, Creator omnium  
Polique rector, vestiens  
Diem decoro lumine,  
Noctem sopore gratia.  
Artus solutos ut quies  
Reddat laboris usui,  
Mentesque fessas adlevet  
Luctusque solvat anxios<sup>1</sup>’

<sup>1</sup> Oh God ! who mad'st this wondrous Whole,  
Upholder of the starry Pole,  
Thou clothest Day with comely light,  
Thou draw'st the soothing veil of Night.  
Thus, our tired limbs sweet Slumber's peace  
Prepares for toil, through toil's surcease,  
To wearied souls brings hope again,  
And dulls the edge of sorrow's pain.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

386.

Discovery  
of the  
bodies of  
Gervasius  
and Pro-  
tasius.

But in time even the new psalmody probably began to pall upon the worshippers, as they spent day after day in the beleaguered church. Then came that well-known event, which has perhaps given rise to more discussion than anything in the history of Milan, the finding of the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius. The new Basilica, of which we have already heard, was ready for consecration, and there was a general request that it should be consecrated 'after the Roman custom.' 'I will do so,' said Ambrose, 'if I find any relics of martyrs to place in it.' Warned in a dream, or else guided to the place by some unaccountable instinct<sup>1</sup>, he ordered excavations to be made in front of the lattice-work which separated nave from chancel in the church of SS. Felix and Nabor. Mysterious heavings of the earth followed; and soon the diggers came on two bodies 'of men of wonderful stature, such as the olden age gave birth to<sup>2</sup>.' The bones were perfect, and there was a quantity of blood in the grave. The bodies were removed in the evening to the Basilica of Fausta, where they were watched through the night by a crowd of worshippers. On the following day they were transferred to the new Basilica, which, perhaps, now received the name of Ambrosiana. There Ambrose preached a sermon to the

Many hymns are attributed to Ambrose, but the only ones which are quite certainly his appear to be 'Deus, Creator omnium,' 'Aeternae rerum conditor,' 'Jam surgit hora tertia,' and 'Veni, redemptor gentium' (Simcox, *Hist. of Latin Literature*, ii. 395). We get a better account, though brief, of this stage of the dispute from Augustine (*Confessions*, ix. 7) than from Ambrose.

<sup>1</sup> Augustine mentions the dream: Ambrose only speaks of 'cujusdam ardor praesagii.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Invenimus mirae magnitudinis viros duos ut prisca aetas ferebat' (*Epistola Ambrosii*, I. xxii.).



excited multitude, in which he informed them that old men remembered to have read an inscription on the stone under which the bodies were found, recording that there lay buried Gervasius and Protasius, sons of Vitalis, who had suffered martyrdom (at Ravenna, some said) in the reign of Domitian. Miracles followed the miraculous discovery. Evil spirits were cast out, crying as they went, to the martyrs, ‘Why have you come to torment us?’ and a blind man, named Severus, a butcher by trade, received his sight on touching the fringe of the martyrs’ shroud.

The Arians laughed at the newly-discovered saints, and denied the miracles wrought at their shrine: but in their hearts they felt that the victory was won. The eloquent sermons, the crowded Basilica, the chaunted antiphones had done much, but the bodies larger than the ordinary stature of men, and the blood preserved through three centuries, completed the victory. Henceforth Valentinian and his mother meekly bore the Ambrosian yoke, and nothing more was heard of an Arian Basilica in Milan.

After all the dull folios that have been printed on the subject of the discovery of the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius it is still difficult, perhaps impossible, to arrive at a conclusion as to the real nature of that event. The attempts to rationalise away the marvel are not very satisfactory, and we seem shut up to one of two alternatives, miracle or fraud, either of which is almost equally unacceptable. Without attempting to decide so thorny a question here, this one observation may be made, that in the Bishop of Milan we are dealing, not with a Teuton knight of the Middle Ages, nor with a trained and scrupulous student of Nature in the 19th

BOOK I. century. Though a noble representative of his class,  
CH. 8. Ambrose was after all a Roman official of the Empire.

386.

Even under the republic the Romans had more than once shown themselves 'splendidly mendacious' (the very phrase came from a Latin poet) on behalf of their country. Centuries of despotism had not, probably, strengthened the moral fibre of the Roman official classes. In the strife with 'principalities and powers' in which Ambrose was engaged, his mind was so entirely engrossed with the nobility and holiness of his ends that he may have been—I will not venture to say that he was—something less than scrupulous as to his means<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In discussing this strange and difficult question, to which I feel it extremely difficult to find an answer that satisfies all the moral conditions of the problem, it is important to remember what was the predisposition of men's minds at that time, since even a great and strong intellect like that of Ambrose does not entirely escape from the influence of the 'Zeitgeist.' Now, at the close of the fourth century there was a perfect mania for the discovery of relics. Two or three years after the date that we have now reached, the severed head of John the Baptist was found in Cilicia: a few years afterwards, on the borders of the country of the Philistines, the bodies of Habakkuk and Micah; in the same neighbourhood a generation later, the bodies of Zachariah and Stephen (Sozomen, H. E. vii. 21, 29, ix. 17). These conspicuous instances doubtless represent a great multitude of other humbler discoveries or imaginations of the same kind. If the comparison be not thought unworthy of the dignity of the subject, I would suggest that our own attitude of mind with reference to spots commemorated in fiction and poetry is somewhat similar. How many of the imaginary scenes described by Sir Walter Scott are already without any deliberate deception provided with appropriate memorials by popular fancy and tradition! 'Populus vult decipi et decipiatur' is a dangerous saying, but if it be ever applicable it is to such harmless illusions as these. I must confess for myself that I would rather some little pious fraud (of which I was ignorant) should be practised, than that the blood of Rizzio should utterly disappear from the floor of Holyrood.

In connection with these miracles allusion has been made to one name which was to be even greater and of more world-historical importance than that of Ambrose, the name of Augustine. Though Church History is not our present concern, we may observe in passing that it was in 383, the year of Gratian's death, that he who was one day to be the greatest father of the Latin Church crossed the sea from Carthage to Rome. Still a Manichean by creed, and a teacher of rhetoric by profession, he came to the capital chiefly in order to find a more peaceable set of students than those who at Carthage turned his class-room into a Babel of confusion. The students at Rome, though more orderly, behaved more shabbily than their African contemporaries. It was a frequent practice with them to migrate from one professor to another just as the fees of the first were falling due, and thus Augustine discovered that though his existence was peaceful, his means of support were likely to be somewhat precarious. Soon however, on the receipt of a petition from the people of Milan for a State-appointed teacher of rhetoric, he was sent to that city. The Prefect of Rome who made this appointment, and who gave him his free pass at the public expense to Mediolanum, was none other than Symmachus, greatest and most eloquent of the advocates of heathenism. It was a strange coincidence that such a man should set the wheels in motion which brought about the conversion to Christianity of her mightiest champion in the western world. But so it proved: Augustine at Milan soon came under the magnetic influence of Ambrose. He had already dropped Manicheism: he now embraced Christianity. He was doubtless in the Basilica when the enthusiastic multitude sang their nightly hymns in

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
—  
Early  
history of  
Augustine.

BOOK I. the ears of the blockading Gothic soldiers. In that  
CH. 8. year (386) he was baptized. In the following year  
 came the memorable parting scene at Ostia with his  
 mother Monica, who uttered her 'Nunc dimittis' as she  
 looked across the peaceful Tyrrhene Sea. Thencefor-  
 ward Augustine's life was passed in Africa, where, after  
 many memorable years, we shall see his sun set amid  
 the storm and stress of the great Vandal invasion.

Character  
 of the  
 reign of  
 Maximus.

From Mediolanum we turn to Augusta Treverorum, where Maximus reigned by the banks of the Moselle. Of that reign we possess scarcely any account except that contained in the Panegyric of Pacatus. This oration, pronounced not many months after his death in the presence of his destroyer, is of course one long diatribe against the fallen tyrant. 'We, in Gaul,' he says, 'first felt the onset of that raging beast. We glutted his cruelty with the blood of our innocents, his avarice by the sacrifice of our all. . . . We saw our consulars stripped of their robes of office, our old men compelled to survive children and property and all that makes life desirable. In the midst of our miseries we were forced to wear smiling faces, for some hideous informer was ever at our side. You would hear them saying, "Why is that man so sad-seeming? Is it because he is reduced to poverty from wealth? He ought to be thankful that he is allowed to live. What does that fellow wear mourning for? I suppose he is grieving for his brother. But he has a son left." And so we did not dare to mourn our murdered relatives for the sake of the survivors. . . . We saw that tyrant clad in purple stand, himself, at the balances, gaping greedily at the spoil of provinces which was weighed out before him. There was gold forced from the hands of matrons,

there were the trinkets of childhood, there was plate still tarnished with the blood of its last possessor. All was weighed, counted, carted away into the monster's home. That home seemed to us not the palace of an Emperor, but a robber's cave.' And so on through many loud paragraphs.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
383-388.

It is difficult to deal with such rhetoric as this, so evidently instinct with the very bitterness of hate. But probably the fact is that Maximus was neither better nor worse than the majority of those who have been before described as the Barrack-Emperors; like them making the goodwill of the soldiery the sheet-anchor of his policy, like them willing to sacrifice law and justice and the happiness of all other classes of his subjects, not precisely to his own avarice, but to the daily and terrible necessity of feeding and pampering the 'Frankenstein' monster, an army whom he himself had taught to mutiny<sup>1</sup>.

Strangely enough, even here we find ourselves again brought face to face with the problems of ecclesiastical

<sup>1</sup> Richter (pp. 620-626) draws an ingenious though covert parallel between Maximus and Napoleon III. He never mentions the name of the latter, but when (writing in 1865) he speaks of 'the Gallic Emperor' whose one desire was to found a dynasty, and to be succeeded by his only son, to attach Italy to himself, to make his name heard of on the shores of the Euxine; who would have been even a good man if it had suited his plans, who always glossed over his wars of ambition with grand-sounding names (he almost says 'who never went to war except for an idea'), who succeeded in attaching to himself the Bureaucracy, the Army, and the Clergy (though the latter could never quite forgive him for his deposition of the legitimate sovereign),—we know quite well whom Richter is aiming at. It is cleverly done, and interesting as a comment on recent history; but I think the result of it is to insert some features in the portrait of Maximus which we do not find in the contemporary authorities.



BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

history. The one event in Maximus' reign which is described to us in some little detail is his persecution of the sect of the Priscillianists, a persecution which excited the horror even of orthodox Christians, and which was apparently, notwithstanding the growlings of Imperial legislators and their threats of what they would do unless their subjects conformed to their rule of faith, the first real and serious attempt to amputate heresy by the sword of the executioner.

Sect of  
the Pris-  
cillianists.

In the later years of the reign of Gratian, the Spanish Church had been agitated by the uprising of the heresy of the Priscillianists. A strange and enthusiastic sect, they had received from the East some of those wild theories by which the Manicheans strove to explain the riddle of this intricate world, more especially the origin of evil, and they had based upon these theories some of those ascetic practices as to which the Catholic Church seemed to hesitate whether she should revere or should denounce them. Like persons who had been present at the making of the world, they talked with the utmost confidence of the shares which God and the Evil One had respectively borne in its formation ; and they told a romantic story of the existence of certain happy, but over-bold spirits in heaven, who promised the Almighty that they would descend into the hostile realm of Matter, take bodily shape and fight for Him. Once having descended through all the spheres they came under the fatal influence of the malign spirits of the air, forgot or only partially remembered their vow of combat, and became estranged from the Lord of Light. These deserters from the Heavenly armament are we or our progenitors.

To these Manichean speculations they joined an

absolute belief in the astrologer's creed of the influence of the stars upon human fortunes. And, discouraging or prohibiting marriage, they also forbade the eating of flesh, and fasted rigorously on the great feast-days of the Church, Christmas and Easter, in order to signify that these days, in which the Saviour by his birth and resurrection entered and re-entered the world of Matter, were no days of joy to the enlightened soul<sup>1</sup>.

The most famous expounder, though not the original propagator, of these doctrines was a man of high birth, large wealth, and considerable mental endowments, named Priscillian. From him the new sect took its name, and he was in course of time consecrated one of its Bishops. The doctrines which the Priscillianists professed, seem to have exerted a peculiar fascination on men and women of literary culture and high social position. Several Bishops joined them, one of whom—Hyginus of Cordova,—was an aged and venerable man who had begun by denouncing them. When, in the course of a few years, the new heresy crossed the Pyrenees it found one of its most earnest adherents in Eucrocia, the widow of Delphidius, a celebrated poet

<sup>1</sup> Since this chapter was in type I have met with Schepss's recently published *Fragments of Priscillian* (1889) and *Essay thereon* (1886). The writings of Priscillian are very curious, containing an anxious assertion of his orthodoxy, anathemas on the worshippers of animals and of uncouthly-named demons, and a perfect cataract of Scripture-texts: but it does not seem to me that they add much to our knowledge of the real tenets of the Priscillianists, which were perhaps reserved for more esoteric teaching. As Lord Acton has pointed out (in his recent article on Döllinger in the *Historical Review*), Priscillian himself advocates capital punishment against the disciples of Manes, 'cujus peculiariter turpitudines persequentes gladio, si fieri posset, ad inferos mitteremus.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

and professor of rhetoric at Bordeaux, who possessed large landed estates in the neighbourhood of that capital<sup>1</sup>.

Opponents  
of Priscillian.

Such were the kind of persons who accepted the Priscillianist teaching. On the other hand, its chief opponents were, by the confession of an orthodox historian<sup>2</sup>, two coarse, selfish and worldly ecclesiastics. Their names were Ithacius, Bishop of Sossuba (in the south of Lusitania), and Idatius, Bishop of Merida, men of like names and like despicable natures<sup>3</sup>. Idatius was a narrow and passionate bigot: Ithacius was a preacher of some eloquence, but he was coarse and sensual, and his gluttonous devotion to the pleasures of the table was an open scandal to the Church. The motives of such a man's dislike to the self-renunciation of the pale-faced and studious Priscillianists could easily be read by all men, while on the other hand the lives of such priests as this gave emphasis to the pleadings of Priscillian for a further purification of the Church.

380.

With the earlier ecclesiastical phases of the controversy we need not concern ourselves. The Priscillianists

<sup>1</sup> Ausonius, in his poem on the Professors of Bordeaux, commemorates the talents and career of Delphidius, a man of pleasant wit and brilliant accomplishments, who sang the praises of Jupiter in his boyhood, an Epic poet and orator, who held in turn all the offices of the State, but whose advancement was checked by the misfortunes of his father. Happy in this, however, he is pronounced, that he did not live to see the error of his daughter and the punishment of his wife.

<sup>2</sup> Sulpicius Severus.

<sup>3</sup> These two so similar names may suggest the need of caution to the *a priori* school of historical criticism. Were we dealing with an earlier age we should undoubtedly be asked to see in them one and the same persecutor, doubled by the uncertainty of tradition or by an error in orthography.

had been condemned by the Council of Saragossa, and the civil power had been invoked to accomplish their banishment from Spain. In vain had they visited Italy to obtain the intervention of Damasus and Ambrose in their favour. Both the Pope and the Bishop of Milan had refused even to grant them an interview. With Gratian however they had been more successful, owing, as their opponents averred, to the bribes which they successfully administered to Macedonius, the young Emperor's 'Master of the Offices'; and one of the last acts of the unfortunate young Emperor had been an Edict of Restitution in their favour. With the accession of Maximus another change came over the scene. A council was by his order summoned to Bordeaux, and at this council matters were going ill with the adherents of the new doctrines, when Priscillian took the bold step of appealing, like Paul, from the Council to Cæsar. Cæsar in this case being the butler-Emperor Maximus of Trier.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

383.

Maximus, surrounded by a throng of sycophantic prelates, and anxious to win the favour of the Catholic Church for his usurping dynasty, perhaps also sharing some of the orthodox Spaniard's dislike for these strange, austere Oriental heretics, was willing to make short work of the trial and condemnation of the Priscillianists. But at this point the greatest of the saints of Gaul appeared in the Imperial Capital and raised his powerful voice in favour of toleration.

The Priscillianists at the tribunal of Maximus.

Saint Martin, born at Sabaria in Pannonia, one of the great men whom in various capacities Illyricum in this century sent forth to govern and regenerate the world, was the son of a heathen officer in the Imperial army, and was destined by his father for the career of a

St. Martin of Tours.



BOOK I.

CH 8.

soldier, notwithstanding his own strong desire to follow the life of a hermit. It was while he was serving as a young officer with his legion at Amiens that the well-known incident occurred of his dividing with his sword his military cloak and bestowing half of it on a shivering beggar. In the visions of the night he saw the Saviour arrayed in his divided *chlamys*, and learned that he had performed that act of charity to Christ. Before long, having dared to say to the young Julian in the crisis of a campaign against the barbarians, 'I am a Christian and cannot fight,' and having by a display of moral courage, which showed what a soldier the legions lost in him, won from the reluctant Emperor his discharge from the army, Martin entered a hermit's cell, from which in the course of years he was drawn by the entreaties and the gentle compulsion of the people to fill the episcopal throne of Tours. But whether in the cell or in the palace, Martin remained a hermit at heart. Or perhaps we should rather say, like one of the preaching friars of nine centuries later, he wandered on a perpetual mission-tour through the villages of Gaul, waging fierce war on the remnants of idolatry, working miracles, casting out devils, and, so said his awe-struck followers, even raising the dead. He had hitherto steadfastly refused to share with the rest of the obsequious Gaulish Bishops the hospitality of Maximus. He appeared at the court from time to time to command, rather than to sue for, forgiveness for the hunted adherents of Gratian: but even on these occasions he refused to sit down at the Imperial banquet, saying that he would not be partaker at the table of the man who had murdered one Emperor and was seeking to dethrone another. It was perhaps during one of



these semi-hostile visits to Trier that the wife of Maximus, who professed unbounded devotion for the holy man, obtained her husband's permission to wait upon him while he took his solitary meal. The Roman Augusta brought to the shaggy-haired, meanly clothed ecclesiastic water to wash his hands. She spread the table, arranged his seat, served him with the food which her own hands had cooked, stood behind his chair with downcast eyes, imitating the submissive demeanour of a slave; and when all was over she collected his broken victuals and feasted upon them herself, preferring them to all the dainties of the Imperial table.

Though he permitted this self-abasement of the Empress, and firmly asserted the dignity of his Episcopal office, St. Martin was upon the whole untouched by either the pride or the bigotry which were becoming the besetting sins of the great churchmen of the age. When still a lad, in the Roman army, he had insisted on treating the one servant whom his position required him to employ, rather as an equal than an inferior; nay, he had often himself pulled off that servant's shoes, and cleaned them from the mud of Picardy. And fervent as was his zeal against idols, he did not revel in the thought of the eternal perdition, even of a demon. In one of those strange colloquies with the Evil One which were beginning to be a characteristic of the hermit's life, when the Accuser of the brethren taunted him with receiving back into Communion some who had fallen from the faith, he said to the Tempter, 'They are absolved by God's mercy: and if even thou, oh wretched one, wouldest cease from hunting the souls of men, and wouldest repent of thy evil deeds, now that the Day of Judgment is at hand, I, truly trusting

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

in the Lord, would dare to promise thee the compassion of Christ.' A daring word truly, and one more in harmony with the genius of our own, than with that of the fourth, or of many intervening centuries.

Execution  
and banish-  
ment of  
the Pris-  
cillianists.

385.

When St. Martin appeared at the Court of Maximus he exacted from the Emperor a promise that the Priscillianists should suffer no punishment in life or limb. But when the awe of the holy man's presence was removed and when the servile herd of Bishops began again clamouring for blood, Maximus, unmindful of his promise, granted their request. Priscillian himself, the generous and enthusiastic student, the dreamer of strange dreams, and framer of wild cosmogonies, was sent by the sword of the executioner into that other world whose mysteries he had so confidently unravelled. Eucrocia, the rhetorician's widow, and five other persons, chiefly clerics in high position, were beheaded. Instantius, a Bishop and one of the most conspicuous of the sect, was banished to the Scilly Islands<sup>1</sup>. Thither also, after suffering confiscation of all his property, was sent Tiberianus, perhaps a wealthy lay-disciple. Such an exile seemed probably, to those who heard the sentence pronounced, little better than death : but one who has seen the sun set over that beautiful bay of islands, and who has gazed on the luxuriant vegetation that is fostered by the

'Summer in alien months and constant spring'<sup>2</sup>

which reigns at Tresco, may doubt whether after all Instantius and Tiberianus had not a happier lot than their persecutors who remained behind amid the baking

<sup>1</sup> 'In Syllinam insulam quae ultra Britanniam sita est deportatus' (Sulp. Severus, *Sacra Hist. Lib. II.*).

<sup>2</sup> 'Ver adsidium atque alienis mensibus aestas.'

summers and fierce winters of Gaul to see their country  
wasted by the desolating inrush of the Vandal and the  
Sueve<sup>1</sup>.

Thus then had the first blood been deliberately shed  
in the persecution of heretics by a Christian Emperor.  
It was an evil deed and one which the most orthodox  
prelates of the Church, Ambrose and Martin, condemned  
as loudly as any heretic. In justice to Maximus,  
however, it should be remembered that they were  
accused as Manicheans, a sect upon whom even the  
tolerant Valentinian had been bitterly severe, and  
that the offences laid to their charge, however un-  
justly, were immoralities rather than misbeliefs<sup>2</sup>. This  
was the kind of defence urged with stammering lips  
by Maximus when the terrible saint of Tours shortly  
afterwards appeared at Trier to demand an explana-  
tion of the violation of the Imperial promise. The  
guilty Bishops earnestly besought the Emperor to  
forbid Martin to enter the capital, and the glutton  
Ithacius had the audacity to accuse the saint himself  
of heresy. But mud flung by such hands as his  
could not stain the white robe which had once been  
shared with Christ Himself, and Martin, who had  
forced his way years before into the unwilling presence

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

St. Martin  
at the  
Court of  
Maximus.

386.

<sup>1</sup> One of the Scilly Islands is named after St. Martin, and contains a church dedicated to him, with a window (modern) representing the incident of the beggar and the cloak. It would be interesting to enquire if the fame of St. Martin was first brought to these islands by the banished Priscillianists.

<sup>2</sup> The chief charges against Priscillian are thus enumerated by Severus: 'Convictum maleficii, nec diffitentem obscenis se studuisse doctrinis, nocturnos etiam turpium feminarum egisse conventus, nudumque orare solitum': the last, a strange article of accusation. Doubtless the confessions were obtained under torture.

BOOK I.

CH. 8.

386.

of Valentinian<sup>1</sup>, was not likely to be kept at a distance by the mandate of Maximus. He appeared in the Emperor's presence, he denounced his cruelty and his breach of faith; he would gladly have shaken the dust of the palace from his feet, but one thing restrained him, a self-imposed commission of mercy. He had come to beg for the lives of two of Gratian's followers, Count Narses and Leucadius, late Praeses of one of the Gaulish provinces, whom Maximus seemed bent on hunting to their doom. Moreover, further measures of severity were about to be taken against the proscribed heretics. Officers of the army were to be sent to Spain with a commission to torture, to confiscate, to kill. Maximus, to whom it was of the utmost importance to be visibly in communion with the great saint of Gaul, gave him to understand that there was one means, and one only, of preventing all these severities, and that was that Martin should accept an invitation to an Imperial banquet.

In sore doubt and perplexity, to stop the further effusion of human blood, the saint consented. Maximus took care to make the banquet a notable one. Men of 'illustrious' rank, the cabinet-ministers of the Emperor, were there: the uncle and brother of Maximus, Counts in high office were also there, and there too was the Consul Euodius, a man of stern temperament, but who generally bore a high repute for the justice of his

<sup>1</sup> As described in the second dialogue of Sulpicius Severus (vi, vii). Under the influence of Justina, Valentinian at first refused the saint an audience, and when after a week's delay he forced his way in, the indignant Emperor declined to rise or in any way acknowledge his presence, till a miraculous conflagration caused him to start from his chair. The interview thus strangely begun led to the concession of all St. Martin's demands.

decisions. Yet the sight of that official cannot have been a pleasant one to St. Martin, since to him in the last resort had been committed the trial of Priscillian and his friends. However, the stately feast went on with no apparent interruption to its harmony. Half-way through it a servant, according to custom, handed the great chalice of wine to the Emperor, who waved it aside and ordered it to be first presented to St. Martin, hoping himself then to receive it from those hallowed fingers. The Bishop, however, when he had tasted it, handed the loving-cup to a Presbyter who accompanied him, signifying by this action that Illustres and Counts and Consuls, nay, even the Emperor himself, were lower in rank than the meanest of the ministers of the Church. Maximus meekly accepted the rebuff, though all marvelled at conduct so unlike that of the other Bishops who thronged the palace of Augusta Treverorum<sup>1</sup>.

Yet, notwithstanding his bold demeanour, and the excellence of the motives which had prompted his compliance, the spirit of St. Martin sank within him when, on his homeward journey, he mused over the past, and reflected that he had, after all, accepted the hospitality of the man of blood, and had received the kiss of peace from the murderer of Gratian, and the slaughterer of the Priscillianists. Deep depression seized his spirit, and as he was journeying through the vast and gloomy forest of Andethanum<sup>2</sup> he sent his

<sup>1</sup> Sulpicius Severus does not distinctly tell us that this incident of the cup occurred at the banquet which was the subject of the negotiations between Maximus and Martin, but the mention of the Consul Euodius makes it almost certain that it occurred at this time.

<sup>2</sup> May we take this for another form of Arduenna, the forest of Ardennes?



BOOK I. companions forward a little space and sat down to brood  
CH. 8.

386.

over the perpetually recurring questions, 'Have I done right?' 'Have I done wrong?' Thus musing he thought he saw an Angel standing by him who said, 'Rightly, oh Martin, does thy conscience trouble thee, yet other way of escape hadst thou none. Up now! and resume thy old constancy, lest, not thy power of working miracles, but thy soul's salvation, be in danger.' Then he arose and went on his way, yet thenceforward sedulously avoided the communion of Ithacius and his crew. Even so, he was for long conscious of a diminution in his miraculous powers, and in all the remaining sixteen years of his life he never again went near a Synod of Bishops.

Before he left the Imperial court Martin had uttered these words of prophecy, 'Oh Emperor! if thou goest, as thou desirest to do, unto Italy, thou wilt be victorious in thy first on-rushing, but soon after thou wilt perish miserably.' The events thus foretold rapidly came to pass.

386.

Maximus  
begins to  
threaten  
Valen-  
tinian.

Three years had passed since Maximus had won without a sword-stroke, by menace and intrigue, the three great countries of the West. He felt that the time was now come for him to win by like arts the realms of Italy and Africa, and he began to assume a menacing attitude towards Justina and Valentinian. Little difficulty had the wolf of Trier in finding grounds of accusation against the trembling lamb of Milan. The decree of toleration for the Arians, the attempt to obtain a basilica in the capital for their worship shocked the pious soul of Maximus. His hospitable invitation to the young Emperor and his mother to visit him in his palace at Trier had not been accepted. There had been

trouble with the barbarians in Raetia and Pannonia, trouble which the friends of Valentinian believed to have been fomented by Maximus, but as in the course of the campaign Bauto, Valentinian's military adviser, had brought the Huns and Alans (whom he was employing to repel the inroads of the Juthungi) near to the frontiers of the Roman province of Germany, that was enough to justify the shrill expostulation of Maximus, 'You are bringing barbarians into the Empire to attack me.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

It seems to have been towards the end of 386, or early in 387, that Justina, alarmed by the threatening tone of Maximus, humbled herself before her triumphant antagonist, Ambrose, and begged him to undertake a second embassy to the usurper. Of his proceedings on this occasion the great prelate has left us a spirited account in the report addressed by him to Valentinian II<sup>1</sup>.

Second  
embassy  
of St.  
Ambrose.

'When I had reached Treveri,' says Ambrose, 'I went on the next day to the palace. The chamberlain, a man of Gaulish birth and an eunuch of the palace, came forth to meet me. I requested an audience, and he asked in reply whether I had any commission from your Clemency. When I said that I had, he answered that I could not have an audience except in full Consistory. I said that this was not the way in which priests were usually treated, and that there were certain matters on which I wished to confer in secret with his master. He went in and brought back the same answer which had evidently been at first dictated by Maximus. I then said that in your interests and in the cause of fraternal piety' (part of the Bishop's commission was to plead for the restoration of Gratian's

<sup>1</sup> Epist. Ambrosii i. 24 (pp. 888-891).

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

386-7.

body) 'I would waive what was due to my rank and accept the proffered humiliation.

'When he had taken his seat in the Consistory and I had entered, he rose up to give me the kiss of peace. I stood still among the members of the Consistory. They began to exhort me to go up to the Emperor's seat, and he also called me thither. I answered, "Why should you kiss one whom you do not recognise? For if you recognised me you would give me audience not here but in your *Secretum*." "Bishop," said he, "you are losing your temper." "No," I answered, "I am not angry, but I blush for your want of courtesy in receiving me in an unsuitable place." "But in the first embassy you appeared in the Consistory." "Not my fault," said I: "the fault lay with him who invited me thither. Besides, then I was asking for peace from an inferior, now from an equal<sup>1</sup>." "Ah, yes," said he, "and whom has he to thank for that equality?" "Almighty God," I answered, "who has reserved for Valentinian that realm which He has given him."

We need not follow in detail the rest of the discussion. Ambrose defended himself from the charge of having outwitted Maximus in the previous embassy, he reiterated his statement of the unreasonableness of expecting the widow and her child to cross the Alps in order to visit the stout soldier at Trier, he vindicated

<sup>1</sup> 'Quia, inquam, tunc ut inferiori pacem petebam, nunc ut aequali.' I think grammar requires us to understand 'inferiori' and 'aequali,' not of Valentinian but of Maximus. And the sense of the passage also requires this construction, for the only change that had taken place was in Maximus' position, who had in the interval between the two embassies been accepted as a regular colleague of the other Emperors. This recognition, St. Ambrose seems to argue, brings with it obligations of courtesy which a colleague should not disregard.

Bauto from the accusation of having sent barbarians into Roman Germany, and again asked for the body of his murdered pupil, Gratian, reminding the usurper that *his* brother, who was even then standing at his right hand, had been sent back, safe and with an escort of honour, by Valentinian, when the young Emperor might have avenged his brother's death upon him. All was in vain. Maximus utterly refused to surrender the body of Gratian (of whose death he again protested his innocence), alleging that the sight of that corpse would 'stir up' the soldiers 'to some sudden act of mutiny.' He complained that the friends of the late Emperor were flocking to the Court of Theodosius, which, as Ambrose remarked, was no wonder, when they remembered the fate of Vallio, that noble soldier, sacrificed for his fidelity to the murdered prince. The mention of Vallio's name led to an incoherent outburst of rage on the part of Maximus. He had never ordered him to be killed, but if Vallio had fallen into his hand he would have sent him to Cabillonum<sup>1</sup>, and had him burned alive. With this the conference ended, and St. Ambrose, who had certainly achieved no diplomatic success,—perhaps diplomatic success was impossible—concluded his report of his mission with these words, 'Farewell, oh Emperor, and be on your guard against a man who is hiding war under the cloak of peace.'

It was important for Maximus to get rid of Ambrose from his Court, for the invasion which he was now meditating was nominally in the interest of orthodoxy, and it would have been too flagrant an absurdity to commence such an enterprise under the ban of excommunication from the greatest champion of orthodoxy

Ostentatious piety of Maximus.

<sup>1</sup> Chalons sur Saone.

BOOK I. in Italy. Already the usurper had addressed a letter  
CH. 8. to Pope Siricius, the successor of Damasus, boasting  
Cir. 386. of his great deeds in the suppression of the Priscillianist heresy, protesting his zeal for the true faith, and declaring that the ruin of the Church had been averted by his timely and providential elevation to the throne, and by the measures which he had taken to correct the disorders which had crept in under his predecessor<sup>1</sup>. Now the ground thus prepared was utilised by another letter addressed to the young Valentinian, and no doubt widely circulated through his dominions. In this letter 'Our Clemency' expresses to 'Your Serenity' the concern with which 'we have heard that you are mad enough to make war upon God and His saints.' 'What is this that we hear, of priests besieged in their basilicas, of fines inflicted, of capital punishment threatened, of the most holy law of God overturned under the pretext of I know not what principle [of toleration]. Italy and Africa, Spain and Gaul, agree in the faith which you are seeking to overturn: only Illyricum, I blush to say it, wavers, and the judgments of God are falling on that Illyrian city of Margus, which has been the stronghold of Arianism<sup>2</sup>. Yet your Serene Youth is trying to overturn the faith of the whole world, and is making perilous innovations in the things of God. If Our Serenity hated you we should rejoice to see you thus acting; but we hope you

<sup>1</sup> Maximi ad Siricium Epistola ap. Baronium, 387, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Maximus alludes probably to those barbarian invasions of Pannonia, of which we have dim rumours. 'Utinam illud columen Arianae legis, Margense oppidum permaneret et non ad iudicium quoddam erroris miseri concidisset,' &c. Margus was about thirty miles east of Belgrade, at the confluence of the Morava and the Danube. (Maximi Epist. ap. Baronium, 387, 33-36.)



will believe that we are speaking to you in love and for your own interest, when we call upon you to restore Italy, and venerable Rome, and all your provinces to their own Churches and their own priests, and not to meddle yourself in these matters at all, since it is obviously more becoming that Arian sectaries should conform to the Catholic faith than that they should seek to instil their wickedness into the minds of those who now think rightly.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.  
387.

The trembling Valentinian, who seems to have already removed from Milan to Aquileia<sup>1</sup>, in order to be further from his Imperial adviser, sent, perhaps in answer to this letter, another embassy to the Court of Trier. The envoy chosen was Domninus, a Syrian, loyal to Valentinian and intimately acquainted with the secrets of the policy of Justina. This embassy offered to the crafty Maximus a means of overcoming the difficulty presented by those well-guarded Alpine passes which had foiled his previous endeavours. And here it may be noticed in passing, that though we speak with approximate correctness of the Alps as separating Italy from Europe, it is really the Western and Central Alps of which this is especially true. Piedmont and Lombardy are closed in from the West and North by mighty snow-clad ranges, the passes of which it has needed the skill of the best generals of the ancient and modern world to traverse with an army. But on the North-East of Italy the Julian Alps, though rising to the height of 3000 or 4000 feet, interpose no such almost

Embassy  
of Dom-  
ninus.

<sup>1</sup> Τοῦ δὲ Οὐαλεντινιανοῦ πρεσβείαις ἐκ τῆς Ἀκυληΐας χρωμένον (Zosimus, iv. 42). But Clinton points out that according to the Theodosian Code, Valentinian was at Milan till September 8th, and certainly the return of Domninus, followed by Maximus through the passes of the Cottian Alps, favours the theory that his master was still at Milan.

BOOK I. impenetrable barrier, and in the course of this history  
 CH. 8. we shall see these mountains often crossed by large  
 387. armies with comparative ease.

When Domninus arrived at Augusta Treverorum he received a very different welcome from that which had been given to Ambrose. Costly gifts were pressed upon his acceptance; he was treated with every mark of respect and even of effusive affection; the Emperor had ever on his lips his love for his young, if somewhat misguided colleague, and soon Domninus was convinced that Valentinian had in all the world no truer friend than Magnus Clemens Maximus. As a substantial token of his friendship, Maximus, though doubtless somewhat pressed himself by the barbarians in Gaul, would spare some of his best troops to assist Valentinian in the war against the barbarians in Pannonia, and these troops should escort his excellent friend Domninus across the Alps. The generous offer was accepted. Maximus himself moved slowly forward with the bulk of his army. The passes were carefully watched to prevent any tidings of military operations reaching the ears of Valentinian's generals. As soon as the ridge of the Alps was crossed<sup>1</sup> and the difficult marshy land at their feet over-passed, all disguise was thrown off, the main body of the army hastened over the passes now held entirely by the partisans of Maximus. That able negotiator, Domninus, had simply introduced into Italy the vanguard of the army which had come to upset his master's throne<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> We learn from Pacatus (xxx) that it was through the passes of the Cottian Alps (*Col de Genève*) that Maximus descended into Italy.

<sup>2</sup> We get this story of the outwitting of Domninus only from Zosimus (iv. 42). Baronius, comparing the embassy of Domninus with that of Ambrose, makes some reflections, natural to a Cardinal of

At Aquileia all seems to have been confusion and alarm when the news of the invasion was received. BOOK I.  
Ch. 8.  
The stout and wary soldier, Bauto the Frank, was 387.  
Invasion of  
Maximus.  
probably dead, as we hear no mention of his name : and the position which he had held as chief counsellor of the Augusta may perhaps have been taken up by the wealthy and timid Probus, whom we last saw on the point of surrendering Sirmium and who was now again holding the office of Praetorian Prefect<sup>1</sup>. Maximus marched with all speed to Aquileia, but when he arrived there he found that the young colleague who was so dear to him had already departed. Justina with Valentinian and his sisters, accompanied by Probus, had taken ship in the port of Aquileia and sailed round Greece to Thessalonica, from whence they sent an embassy to Theodosius, beseeching him now at length to avenge all the wrong which had been done to the house of Valentinian.

Meanwhile the troops of Maximus, like an overflowing and scarcely resisted flood, were pouring over Italy. It is possible that some of the cities on the Po may have offered sufficient resistance to afford the invader a pretext for abandoning them to the wild rapine of his soldiers<sup>2</sup>. There was trepidation and alarm at Milan, where the soothing eloquence of St. Ambrose was needed the sixteenth century, on the superiority of ecclesiastics to laymen as diplomatists.

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen vii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> St. Ambrose, in a letter to Faustinus (i. 39) to console him for the death of his sister, speaks of the corpses of so many half-ruined cities on the Aemilian way: Bologna, Modena, Reggio, Placentia and others. But the whole passage, which is evidently modelled on Cicero's celebrated letter to Sulpicius, and about equally consolatory with that epistle, is too rhetorical to entitle it to much credence as history.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

387.

to prevent the citizens from abandoning their city in terror<sup>1</sup>. But upon the whole there does not appear to have been much bloodshed, nor anything really amounting to civil war in Italy. Maximus, having thus easily glided into supreme authority over two-thirds of the Roman world, does not seem to have used his usurped power tyrannically. It is significant that the worst crime which is imputed to him at this period of his career, is the issuing of an order for the rebuilding of a Jewish synagogue which had been destroyed by the populace of Rome. Hereupon, we are told, the Christian population shook their heads ominously. 'No good,' said they, 'will befall this man. The Emperor has turned Jew<sup>2</sup>.'

Maximus  
in Rome.

In Rome itself however, among the old Senatorial party, any disposition towards toleration on the part of the late fierce assertor of orthodoxy would be a welcome relief. The Emperor seems to have visited Rome in person, and (possibly on New Year's Day 388) to have listened to an elaborate harangue pronounced by the heathen orator Symmachus in his honour. This oration, which in after years nearly cost the author his life, was prudently suppressed and does not appear among his published speeches<sup>3</sup>.

Meeting of  
Justina  
and Theo-  
dosius.

It was in the autumn, probably in the month of September or October, that the invasion of Maximus and

<sup>1</sup> Ambrose, Serm. 85 (quoted by Baronius).

<sup>2</sup> Ambrose, Ep. i. 40.

<sup>3</sup> After the death of Maximus, Symmachus, having reason to believe that he was about to be proceeded against on a charge of *laesa majestas* (high treason), took refuge in a Novatian church. Leontius, the Bishop of the Novatians, interceded for the eloquent Pagan, and Theodosius showed his regard for the sect by respecting the sanctity of the asylum and pardoning Symmachus, who early in 379 pronounced a panegyric upon him. This oration, like that in praise of Maximus, is lost (Socrates, H. E. v. 14).

the flight of Valentinian took place. Notwithstanding the pleadings of Justina, nearly a year elapsed before her wrongs and those of the house of Valentinian were avenged. At the call of the Empress, Theodosius repaired to Thessalonica, being accompanied by some of the most eminent members of the Senate of Constantinople. A debate ensued, in which it appeared that the universal opinion was that the murderer of Gratian and the despoiler of Valentinian must be at once called upon to justify his conduct before the tribunal of War. The counsel was not acceptable to Theodosius, who, to the surprise of all, proposed that ambassadors should be sent and negotiations should be entered into, to induce Maximus to restore the heritage of Valentinian. Historians hostile to his fame<sup>1</sup> see in this lukewarmness only another evidence of the demoralisation which years of palace-luxury had wrought in the character of Theodosius. Even an impartial critic may suspect that some remembrance of the terrible wrong which the house of Theodosius had once suffered from the house of Valentinian still rankled in the breast of the Eastern Emperor. But there were, as has been already hinted, worthier motives for inaction; the recent danger from the Goths, the ever-present danger from the Persians, the exhaustion of the Empire, the petulant Arianism of Justina, the loudly asserted orthodoxy of Maximus, above all, the terrible shock to 'the Roman Republic' when its Eastern and Western halves should meet in deadly combat on some Illyrian plain, as they had met when Constantine fought with Licinius, when his son fought with Magnentius, as they would, but for a timely death, have met when Constantius warred against Julian.

388.

<sup>1</sup> Such as Zosimus (iv. 44).



BOOK I.  
Ch. 8.

388.  
Theodosius  
marries  
Galla.

All these considerations justified delay. Perhaps delay would have glided on into abandonment of all thoughts of revenge, and truce into cordial alliance with the usurper, but for one personal argument which destroyed the even balance of the scales of Peace and War. Justina, the widow of two Emperors, and one of the most beautiful women of her time, had a daughter, Galla, even lovelier than herself. Theodosius was a widower, his wife Flaccilla having died in the preceding year; and when the beautiful Galla clasped his knees as a suppliant and with streaming eyes besought him to avenge the murder of one brother, and the spoliation of another, Theodosius could no longer resist. Overmastered by her beauty, he sought and obtained her hand in marriage, the one condition imposed by Justina being that he should strike down the murderous usurper and restore his kingdom to Valentinian <sup>1</sup>.

Prepara-  
tions for  
war.

Many preparations were needed; and perhaps also the winter and spring were employed in shaping the pliant mind of Valentinian in the mould of Nicene orthodoxy <sup>2</sup>. Embassies passed to and fro between Constantinople and Milan, but it was probably clear to the ambassadors themselves that there was no reality in their messages. Theodosius may have been indirectly helped by a burst of Franks and Saxons over the

<sup>1</sup> In the Atmeidan or Hippodrome of Constantinople are to be seen, surrounding the base of the obelisk of Thothmes, which was raised there by order of Theodosius, some interesting bas-reliefs which appear to represent the reception of Valentinian by the Emperor and his sons, and his marriage with Galla. The appearance of the two little boys in the first relief, and the addition of the (once) stately step-mother in the second, are full of quaint interest.

<sup>2</sup> As suggested by Richter, p. 653. I do not think, however, that we have any proof that the conversion took place at this time.

Gaulish frontier, threatening Cologne and Mayence, and overstraining the energies of the generals whom Maximus had left to guard the throne of his young son and associated colleague Victor<sup>1</sup>. Not less was the relief afforded by the conclusion of peace with Persia<sup>2</sup>, which enabled Theodosius to muster all the hosts of his realm for the westward march, free from anxiety as to the long and weak frontier of the Euphrates.

On the other hand the Arians, even in Constantinople, were restless and still numerous enough to be an element of danger<sup>3</sup>. And great as was the popularity of the Emperor with the Gothic *foederati*, it remained to be seen how that popularity would stand the strain of war. Indeed Maximus, whose one idea of strategy seems to have been to bribe the soldiers of his opponent, had actually entered into negotiations with some of the barbarians, offering them large sums of money if they would betray their master. The negotiations, however, were discovered on the eve of the opening of the campaign, and the barbarians implicated, fleeing to the lakes

<sup>1</sup> St. Ambrose, who thinks that all these calamities came upon Maximus as a punishment for the rebuilding of the Jewish synagogue, says (Ep. i. 40): 'Ille igitur a Francis, a Saxonum gente, in Sicilia, Sisciae, Petavione, ubique terrarum victus est.' The interesting details of the Frankish victories are given in a fragment of Sulpicius Alexander, curiously embalmed in Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*, ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 'Fidem regum quibus limes Orientis ambitur, datâ acceptâque dexterâ firmas' (Pacatus, xxxii).

<sup>3</sup> On a rumour of the defeat of Theodosius and the slaughter of a large part of his army, the Arians broke out into sedition, and set the house of Nectarius, the orthodox Bishop, on fire. But the insurrection seems to have been easily suppressed, probably died down at once, when it was discovered that Theodosius was still alive (Sozomen, vii. 14).

BOOK I. and forests of Macedonia, were hunted down and  
 CH. 8. destroyed before the war began.

388.  
 Westward  
 march of  
 Theodo-  
 sius.

At last all the necessary preparations were completed, and about the month of June (388) Theodosius, having divided his army into three bands, marched down the valley of the Morava and entered the Western Empire at Belgrade<sup>1</sup>. Justina and her daughters had been sent by sea to Rome<sup>2</sup>, where already the cause of Maximus had become unpopular. For some reason not explained to us Maximus had concluded that Theodosius would make his attack by sea, and Andragathias, his accomplice in the murder of Gratian and his chief military adviser, with a large part of his army was cruising about the narrow seas, hoping to intercept either Theodosius, who never set sail, or Justina, who was already safe in port.

The two chief generals on Theodosius' side were Promotus, Master of Cavalry, and Timasius, Master of Infantry. The two Teutons, Richomer and Arbogast, also held high commands. All depended on rapid movement, and the Eastern army, inspirited probably and roused to emulation by the warlike spirit of the Gothic *foederati* among them, responded admirably to the call made upon them by their leaders. By forced marches they reached Siscia, now the Croatian town of Siszek, on the Save. The dusty, panting soldiers pushed their steeds into the river, swam across, and successfully charged the enemy. In another more

<sup>1</sup> This is the most probable route, as the Theodosian Code fixes Theodosius at Stobi, in Macedonia, 16th June, 388, and at Scupi, 21st June, and as the first battle takes place at Siscia.

<sup>2</sup> And Valentinian, too, according to Zosimus; but it seems more probable that Theodosius took Valentinian with him.

stubbornly contested battle at Pettau<sup>1</sup>, where the hostile army was commanded by Marcellinus, brother of the usurper, the fiery valour of the Goths, tempered and directed by the Theodosian discipline, again triumphed. Aemona (*Laybach*) opened her gates with rejoicing, and welcomed the liberating host to her streets, hung with carpets and bright with flowers. With an army swollen by numerous desertions from the demoralised ranks of his rival, Theodosius pressed on, over the spurs of the Julian Alps, to Aquileia, where Maximus, whose soldierly qualities seem to have been melted out of him by five years of reigning, cowered behind the walls, awaiting his approach. Aquileia had the reputation of being a virgin fortress, the Metz of Italy, but the forces of the usurper were now too few to form a sufficient garrison. A small body of Moorish soldiers, belonging perhaps to the same legion which had first revolted to him in Gaul, still remained faithful, yet Maximus did not rely too confidently even on their unbribed fidelity. When the troops of Theodosius, with brisk impetuous onset, streamed over the loosely-guarded walls, they found the usurper sitting on his throne, distributing money to his soldiers. They tore off with violent gestures his purple robe, they knocked the diadem from his head, they made him doff his purple sandals, and then, with his hands tied behind him like a slave's, they dragged the trembling tyrant before his judges. At the third milestone from Aquileia, Theodosius and the young lad, his brother-in-law, had erected their tribunal. 'Is it true,' said the Emperor of

<sup>1</sup> The mention of Pettau leads to the conjecture that one of the three bands of Theodosius' army may have moved up the valley of the Drave, while the other two kept to the line of the Save.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

388.

Execution  
of Maxi-  
mus.

28 July  
(Socrates).  
27 August  
(Idatius).

the East, 'that it was with my consent that Gratian was murdered, and that you usurped the crown?' 'It is not true,' Maximus is said to have faltered out, 'but without that pretext I could never have persuaded the soldiers to join in the rebellion.' Theodosius looked upon the fallen potentate, once his comrade, with eyes in which there was some gleam of pity. But if he had any thoughts of clemency, they were not shared by his army, who, perhaps for their own safety, thought it necessary to destroy the man whose fallen majesty they had derided. Countless eager hands dragged him off to the place of punishment, where he was put to death by the common executioner. His son Victor, the young Augustus at Trier, was put to death by Arbogast, who was sent into Gaul on this errand, unworthy of a brave soldier. Andragathius, hearing that his master's cause was lost, leaped into the Adriatic, 'preferring to trust himself to it, rather than to his enemies<sup>1</sup>.'

So fell the usurper Maximus after five years' wearing of the purple, and now at last the body of the murdered Gratian found a resting-place in his brother's capital of Milan<sup>2</sup>.

Theodosius, with splendid generosity, handed over to

<sup>1</sup> The Panegyric of Pacatus is practically the only source—and a most unsatisfactory one—from which we derive any details as to the campaign against Maximus. Orosius (vii. 35) represents the army of Maximus as greatly superior in numbers, but says that owing to his leaving the Alpine passes unguarded, and directing all his energies to defence against the expected attack by sea, Theodosius won an almost bloodless victory. It seems probable that surprise played a large part in the campaign, and that the victory was due rather to clever strategy and rapid marching than to hard fighting. If this be so, probably Pacatus' battle-pieces are greatly over-coloured.

<sup>2</sup> This does not seem to be expressly stated, but, as Tillemont says, may be inferred from the authorities.



Valentinian not only the young Emperor's own previous share of the Empire, but also his brother Gratian's<sup>1</sup>, remaining content with the Eastern provinces which he had ruled from the beginning. It was clearly understood however, and in fact resulted from the necessity of the case, that the great soldier who had won back the heritage of Valentinian was supreme over the whole Empire. This supremacy involved the complete victory of the Nicene Creed in the West as well as the East, a victory which was aided by the conversion of Valentinian and the timely death of Justina, who had scarcely returned to her son's palace at Milan when she ended her troubled life<sup>2</sup>. The next three years after the overthrow of Maximus were spent by Theodosius in Italy, at Milan, at Rome, at Verona, in setting in order those affairs of Church and State, which in his judgment had gone wrong since the firm hand of the elder Valentinian had failed from the helm<sup>3</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 8.

388.  
The  
Western  
provinces  
restored to  
Valen-  
tinian II.

388-391.

<sup>1</sup> Τὴν μὲν οὖν βασιλείαν πᾶσαν Οὐαλεντινιανῶ παρέδωκεν, ὅσῃν ἔτυχεν ἔχων ὁ τοῦτου πατήρ says Zosimus; but we have a better authority in St. Augustine (De Civitate Dei, v. 26), 'Mox tyranni Maximi extincor [Theodosius] Valentinianum puerum imperii sui partibus unde fugatus fuerat cum misericordissimâ veneratione restituit.' It is true that there is no express mention made here of Gratian's share, but it may be understood that this is St. Augustine's meaning.

<sup>2</sup> Zosimus (iv. 47) says that Justina 'dwelt with her son after his restoration, supplying by her prudence, as far as a woman might, the deficiencies of his youth.' Prosper Tiro says that 'she was prevented by death from recovering the kingdom with her son.' It is probable that she died soon after the restoration.

<sup>3</sup> The Theodosian Code shows Theodosius at Aquileia, after his victory, on the 22nd September, 388; and again at the same place on his homeward route to Constantinople, 16th June, 391.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE INSURRECTION OF ANTIOCH.

#### Authorities.

#### *Sources:—*

BOOK I. For the events narrated in the following chapter we have  
CH. 9. two invaluable contemporary authorities, Libanius and Chrysostom.

LIBANIUS, professor of rhetoric, was born at Antioch in the year 314. He lost his father when he was ten years old, and the care of his education devolved on his mother, a gentle and loveable woman, who after her husband's death lived only for her children. All the traditions of his family, and the influences which were brought to bear upon him in childhood, breathed the spirit of Hellenism; and a worshipper of the old gods of Greece Libanius remained through life, notwithstanding the ever-increasing number of the votaries of Christianity in Antioch. In his fifteenth year Libanius solemnly dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge, a pursuit, however, which according to the ideas of the time meant chiefly the reading of the Greek poets and the rather profitless toil of a student of rhetoric. After visiting Greece and spending several years of middle life at Constantinople and Nicomedia, he returned to his native city about the year 354, and there spent the remainder of his days. As a State-paid professor of rhetoric he received the *Ateleia* or immunity from all political and fiscal claims, and thus escaped the dangerous honour of a seat in the Senate to which many of his friends were entitled. As a heathen he hailed with joy the accession of Julian (361), praised enthusiastically his measures for the restoration of the

ancient faith, and wrote a mournful monody on his death, bitterly reproaching the gods for allowing their votary to be cut off before his prime. Libanius was seventy-three years old at the time of the insurrection of Antioch, which was the last public event in which he took a prominent part. He composed five orations on the subject, two addressed (or supposed to be addressed) to Theodosius, one aimed at the fugitives from the city, and one addressed to each of the two Commissioners, Caesarius and Hellebichus. Zosimus represents him as sent on an embassy from the citizens of Antioch to the Imperial Court, but this is certainly an error, probably derived from the fact that in his first oration to Theodosius, Libanius represents himself, by a rhetorical fiction, as having undertaken the long and difficult journey to the capital in order to plead for his fellow-citizens.

The orations themselves, though they supply us with some valuable information, are tedious and vapid in the extreme. There is no orderly grouping of facts, no steady march in the argument. The orator darts from one obscurity to another without plan or method; and one cannot but feel that it was fortunate for the citizens of Antioch that the irritable Emperor was spared the annoyance of listening to such an intercessor. Libanius had suffered all his life from weak health, and perhaps the utter poverty of these speeches may be partly excused by the fact that he was sinking into his dotage.

The year of Libanius' death is uncertain, but it is possible that he survived to the accession of Arcadius (395). It is said that on his death-bed he was asked who should succeed him in his professor's chair, and that he answered, 'It should have been Chrysostom if the Christians had not stolen him from us.'

For John surnamed CHRYSOSTOM (the golden-mouthed) was in his youth one of the pupils of Libanius. He was born at Antioch about 346, the son of an 'illustrious' Master of the Soldiery, who died when Chrysostom was an infant. At the age of twenty he began to attend the school of Libanius, where he soon gave indications of his future eminence as an orator. At this time he was intending to practise as an advocate in the law-courts, thus entering upon a career which would probably have led a man of his abilities to the highest civil dignities of the Empire. But under the influence of a friend of his named

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

Basil (not the great Cappadocian St. Basil) Chrysostom became more and more dissatisfied with his chosen profession, and cherished with increasing affection the thought of devoting himself along with Basil and two other young men (one of whom was the celebrated Theodore of Mopsuestia) to what he called 'the true philosophy,' a life of monastic self-seclusion from the world. The earnest entreaties of his mother, who had set her heart on seeing him pursue a brilliant career in the Prefect's Court, prevailed upon him for a time to forego this design; but at length about the year 374 (possibly after his mother's death), he finally quitted the bar and retired to a monastery in the mountains south of Antioch, which was governed by the rule of the Egyptian Pachomius. After four years he left his cell in the monastery for a solitary cave, or in the technical language of monasticism, he exchanged the life of a coenobite for that of an anchorite. Here his austerities were so great that he was able to continue this mode of life for only two years. With a prematurely wasted frame and health permanently injured, he returned to Antioch, where in the year 381 he was ordained as a deacon by Meletius shortly before the departure of that prelate to the Council of Constantinople. In 386 he received the office of presbyter from the hands of Flavian, the successor of Meletius, and at once began to make his mark as the greatest preacher of his city, and (as was soon discovered) the greatest preacher of the Christian world. He had been thus engaged for about a year, when the insurrection of Antioch broke out, and 'the Homilies on the Statues,' twenty in number, were preached by him. Though too diffuse, these homilies are models of grave, well-sustained, and earnest eloquence (incomparably superior to the obscure platitudes of Libanius), and we are indebted to them for some of our most vivid impressions of the Imperial City of Antioch in her varying moods of insolence and terror.

The precise order of the Homilies on the Statues cannot perhaps now be clearly ascertained. In spite of Clinton's defence (*Fasti Romani*, i. 515) it does not seem possible to uphold the order in which they are now arranged. The following is the chronology of the period between the insurrection and the pardon according to Dr. Arnold Hug, whose monograph on the subject is alluded to below:—

March 4,	Outbreak of the Sedition.			BOOK I. CH. 9.
„ 6-13, 1st week of Lent	} Homily 2. Departure of Flavian. Homilies 3-8, 15.			387.
„ 13-20, 2nd „ „				
„ 20-27, 3rd „ „		Homilies 16 (The Prefect in the Church), 9, 20.		
		March 29 (Monday) Arrival of the Commissioners.		
		„ 30 (Tuesday) Preliminary enquiry.		
„ 27-Apr. 3, 4th „ „		„ 31 (Wednesday) Day of judgment. Postponement of sentence.		
		April 1 (Thursday) Departure of Caesarius.		
April 3-10, 5th „ „		Homilies 11, 12, 13 (Wednesday), 17, 14, 18 (half of Lent over: not yet 20 days since the first edict of the Emperor). Towards the end of the week, arrival of Caesarius at Constantinople, and pardon of the Antiochenes.		
„ 10-17, 6th „ „		Homily 20 (10 days before Easter).		
„ 17-24, 7th „ „		(Beginning of this week or end of the previous one.) Arrival of the decree of pardon. Rejoicings in the city.		
„ 25, Easter Sunday.		Homily 21. The Christians celebrate at the same time the return of Flavian.		

Some of the chief events in the later career of Chrysostom will come under our notice in a subsequent chapter.

The ecclesiastical historians, especially THEODORET, supply some few further particulars, but are not very accurate in their dates.

*Guides :—*

The careful little Essay of Dr. Arnold Hug, ‘*Antiochia und der Aufstand des Jahres 387 n. Chr.*’ (Winterthur, 1863), deals



BOOK I. exhaustively with the subject of this chapter. But in order to  
 CH. 9. understand the historical framework of the story, it will be  
 387. well to consult Dr. G. R. Sievers, 'Das Leben des Libanius' (Berlin, 1868), published after the death of its author, and a truly admirable specimen of a German monograph, laborious but clear, often even graphic, and above all furnished with a very complete index.

The life of St. John Chrysostom, by the Rev. W. R. W. Stephens (London, 1883: 3rd edition), will also be found very helpful.

Defects in  
 the finan-  
 cial policy  
 of Theo-  
 dosius.

It has been already hinted that Theodosius was not an economical ruler of the Empire. Both his policy and his pleasures compelled him to make large demands on the purses of his subjects. The chiefs of the *foederati*, who doubtless thought the wealth of the great Empire boundless, could not be kept in good humour without rich presents for themselves and frequent largesse for their followers. And, whether we accept or partially reject the accusations of Zosimus, who never tires of inveighing against the luxury, the extravagance, the prodigality of Theodosius, it is clear he had no tendency towards parsimony, and that he had very high notions of the state which a Roman Augustus ought to maintain. Possibly a liberal expenditure was a wise policy for the Empire; certainly frugality like that of Valens had proved in the end disastrously expensive: but, whether wise or unwise, the heavy demands which it necessitated upon the resources of the tax-payers caused, doubtless, many a muttered execration against this spendthrift Spaniard, his barbarians, and his chamberlains, execrations of which we not only hear the distant echo in the words of Zosimus, but can listen to their turbulent explosion in the story of the insurrection of Antioch.

In the beginning of the year 387 (before Maximus had openly declared war upon Valentinian), Theodosius determined to celebrate the expiration of eight years of his own government and four of the conjoint rule of himself and his young son Arcadius<sup>1</sup>, or in more technical language his own Decennalia and his son's Quinquennalia. The festival of the Quinquennalia, instituted in imitation of the Greek Olympiads, recurred every fifth year, that is, at the expiration of the fourth, the ninth, and the fourteenth years of the ruler's reign, and so on. It consisted of games, chariot-races, and musical contests; but above all, in the present state of the Empire, and with the ever-growing demands of the German *foederati*, it was an occasion for increased largesse to the soldiery. Letters were accordingly written by the Emperor, commanding the provinces to furnish extraordinary contributions for these Quinquennalia<sup>2</sup>. These letters caused probably in most cities of the already over-burdened East, such domestic scenes as are vividly described to us by the great preacher of Antioch<sup>3</sup>: 'When we hear that gold is required of us by the Emperor, every one goes to his house and calls together his wife, his children, and his slaves, that he may consult with them from what source

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

387.  
Quinquennalia of  
Arcadius.

<sup>1</sup> The four years of Arcadius' reign ended on the 16th January, and the eight of his father's on the 19th January, 387. It was a year too soon for the Decennalia of Theodosius, but the union of the two festivals seems to have been represented as an act of consideration for the tax-payer.

<sup>2</sup> I do not think that we are informed either of the name or of the amount of the contributions thus ordered; but it seems probable that they would be of the nature of *aurum coronarium*: and the above quotation from Chrysostom seems to confirm this suggestion.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom, Ad Populum Antiochenum, Homil. 3.

BOOK I. he shall raise that contribution.' But though we hear  
 CH. 9. rumours of seditious movements at Alexandria<sup>1</sup> and  
 387. Beyrout, it was only at Antioch that the discontent  
 caused by these unwelcome letters burst into a flame.

Exacting  
 disposition  
 of the  
 citizens of  
 Antioch.

For the special irritation displayed by the citizens of Antioch there were several reasons. The great capital of the East, situated in the delightful valley of the Orontes, with her massive walls boldly climbing the picturesque heights of Mount Silpius, her long colonnade, the work of Herod, her Royal Palace, her Forum, her Hippodrome; the city which had been for near three centuries the seat of the mighty kingdom of the Seleucidae, the city which now prided herself yet more on having been the birthplace of the name 'Christian,' was disposed to be somewhat exacting in her demeanour towards her Roman rulers. Julian's slovenly attire and unkempt beard had moved the scorn of the citizens of Antioch, a scorn so openly displayed as to provoke him to the undignified retaliation of the satire *Misopogon*<sup>2</sup>. Jovian, whose abandonment of Nisibis filled the people of Antioch with fears lest they should be the next victims, was assailed in scurrilous libels<sup>3</sup>, and had Helen's bitter taunt to Paris hurled in his face—

'Back you are come from the fight: I would you had died on the war-plain<sup>4</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> At Alexandria the people in the Theatre broke out into invectives against Theodosius, and publicly expressed their wish that the over-turner of the Western throne (Maximus) would come thither also (Libanius, *Orat.* xii. *Ad Theodosium*).

<sup>2</sup> Beard-hater.

<sup>3</sup> *Τοῖς καλουμένοις φημώσσοις* (*famosis*), Joannes Antiochenus, *fr.* 181, *ap.* Müller, *vol.* iv.

<sup>4</sup> *Iliad* iii. 428. The story is told by Suidas s. v. *Ἰοβιανός*. I owe these two quotations to Hug.

But the dark and suspicious Valens, so little loved in the rest of the Empire, seems to have been generally popular in Antioch, on account of his having preferred it to Constantinople as his chief place of abode. Now, however, this new Spanish Emperor, who was approaching the Decennalia of his reign, had not once favoured the dwellers by the Orontes with a sight of his comely countenance. Antioch, therefore, was already sore at heart with her sovereign as well as overburdened with the expenses of his administration, when these letters of his came (probably in the early days of March 387) to turn the mob's dislike into hatred and the tax-payer's perplexity into despair.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
— — —  
387.

The story of the insurrection which now broke forth, brings into strong relief the character of the two classes which together made up the bulk of the free population of Antioch as of the other cities of the Empire. There was first the Middle Class, as we should now call it, timid, unenterprising, still perhaps wealthy, though groaning under the heavy burdens imposed upon it by the financial necessities of the sinking Empire. From this class, centuries ago, had emerged the citizens who, with eager emulation, had contended with one another for the honour of a seat in the *Curia* or Senate of their native city, and the glory of being addressed as *Decurio*. That state of things had now long passed away. Though the *Curia* had still some power (of the kind recently possessed in England by 'Quarter Sessions' and now by the 'County Council'), it was well understood among all classes, that the responsibility attached to the office of *Decurio* so largely outweighed the power, that no reasonable being would covet a seat in the local Senate for its own sake. Instead of a

The Senatorial class  
at Antioch.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

387.

coveted honour, therefore, it had become a dreaded, but hereditary, burden imposed on the infant son of a Decurio at birth and (for the most part) only to be escaped from by death. Above these Curial families stood a small privileged class of functionaries, Prefects, Counts, Consulars, and their children, the most highly prized of whose immunities consisted in this, that they could no longer be called upon to discharge 'Curial obligations.' Below them lay the great sensual, swinish mass of Forum-loungers. All that was onerous in public life, fell with ever-increasing weight on the middle class of Decurions. The collection of the revenue, the responsibility for the corn-rations, the care of the prisons, even the heating of the baths, devolved on these men; and whoever else might by jobbery and peculation defraud the public revenue, it seems clear that the Decurion had no chance of plundering, but only the dreary necessity of making good the deficiency caused by the plundering of others.

It is no wonder that a class thus heavily burdened was ever dwindling both in numbers and in wealth. The Senate of Antioch, which had once consisted of 600 members, had so far fallen away that the Emperor Julian took credit to himself for having raised its number to 200; yet, notwithstanding this temporary increase, that number had again fallen to 60 in 386, and in 388 (the year following the insurrection), it was only 12<sup>1</sup>. The same attenuation was evidently going on throughout the Empire. The governor of Cilicia, at the period of which we are now treating, found the Senate of the city of Alexandria in that province

<sup>1</sup> See Libanius (ed. Reiske), ii. 575 and 528. Julian Misopogon, p. 106. I owe these references to Sievers, p. 7 n. 36.



reduced to one lame man, but raised it to 15 without violence, but merely by kind words and the assurance that the agents of the centralised despotism at Constantinople should not be permitted to plunder the new Senators, who might even make some profit out of their administrative functions. These fair words drew the desired Senators from their hiding-places under beds and couches or in the caves of the mountains, to undertake, even with alacrity, 'Curial obligations.' Once, too, when the first Valentinian, in one of his cruel moods, issued a decree that for the punishment of some disorders in one of the provinces, three Decurions in each of its cities should be put to death, the Prefect to whom this order was addressed replied pleasantly, 'What is to be done if a town have not so many as three Decurions in it? You ought to add these words to the Edict, "(Let them be killed) if they can be found<sup>1</sup>."'

Such then was the burdened, sorely pressed life of the comparatively wealthy citizens of the Middle Class who were left in the cities of the Empire. It is easy to see that it reproduces the so-called 'liturgies' (obligations to undertake certain services to the State), which formed so marked a feature in the life of ancient Athens, and it is indeed under this term that the Curial obligations are constantly spoken of by contemporary orators<sup>2</sup>; but the means to discharge these liturgies had grown smaller, the command to perform them harsher and more irresistible, the inducement which had once been the desire to earn the favour of one's fellow citizens,

<sup>1</sup> Libanius, *Ad Celsum*, Ep. 608 (ed. Wolf), and Ammianus Marcellinus, xxvii. 7. 7 (both quoted by Kuhn, *Verf. des Röm. Reichs*, i. 248).

<sup>2</sup> Especially Libanius.

BOOK I. and to be by them raised to the high places of the  
 CH. 9. State, had vanished altogether.

387.

Privileges  
 of the mob.

But as the rich liturgy-performing aristocracy, so also the pampered liturgy-enjoying democracy of the cities of the Empire, carries us back in remembrance to the days of Aristophanes. The idea of the Roman Empire was in the main urban, as was that of the Athenian Empire, and not only were they both urban, but both were in a certain sense socialistic. To keep the populace of the capital cities of the Empire in good humour was one of the chief cares of a Roman Augustus, and almost of equal importance with the other two, the maintenance of the loyalty of the army and the repulse of the incursions of the barbarians. At Antioch, as at Rome, at Constantinople, and at Alexandria, the citizens enjoyed a free distribution of corn or rather of bread, at the expense of the State. The precise amount of this daily ration does not seem to be handed down to us, but there can be no doubt that it was sufficient to support life for the receiver and his family, and to obviate the necessity of work. The bath—that luxury which is almost a necessity under a Syrian sky—was also open, either gratuitously or at an exceedingly small charge, to all classes of the community; and when the water was not heated hot enough, Demos in the Theatre howled his disapprobation and even threw stones at the governor who had been so slack in enforcing the ministrations of the richer citizens to his comfort<sup>1</sup>. Twice (in 382 and 384) an unfavourable season raised the price of corn. The people in the Theatre cried out for larger loaves, cheaper loaves. In

<sup>1</sup> Libanius, ii. 93–95 (Sievers, 164). The governor was Icarius, Comes Orientis, 384.

spite of the opposition of certain members of the Senate, who had some dim previsions of the science now known as Political Economy, a governor was each time found who issued a decree lowering the price of the loaf. Unable to comply with the decree the bakers left the city and fled to the mountains. Naturally the famine in the city was not lessened by their departure. The law was withdrawn and the bakers returned but led a precarious existence, always liable to be arrested, and flogged through the streets of Antioch if a governor wished to curry favour with the people, and to repel by this easy demonstration the charge of having himself shared in the profits of the unpopular class <sup>1</sup>.

We have glanced at the condition of the urban population, of which we always hear most; but we must not forget that there was in the rural districts of Syria a large peasant-class, which is comparatively mute in Imperial history. A sermon of St. Chrysostom <sup>2</sup> brings before us the patient, toilsome lives of these men, strangers to the language, to the pleasures, and to the vices of the city-populace, but united to them in faith; and in their temperate and frugal existence illustrating the spirit of Christianity far better than the noisy theological disputants of Antioch. The yoke of the Imperial government pressed heavily on these men, who could not shout applause in the Hippodrome, or hurl stones and taunts at the Prefect in the Theatre, and who therefore, as representative government was unknown, had no means of influencing the administration of affairs. Thus, when the populace were raging at the high price of bread, an edict was issued, forbidding any

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

387.

The Aramaic-speaking rural population.

<sup>1</sup> Sievers, 155, 165.

<sup>2</sup> Homily 19 (τῇ κυριακῇ τῆς Ἐπισωζομένης).

BOOK I. peasant to carry more than two loaves out of the city,  
CH. 9. and soldiers were stationed at the gates to enforce the

387.

observance of this decree. Thus also, by a yet more vexatious enactment, it was provided that every rustic who brought hay or straw into the city should carry out of it a certain quantity of the *débris* of houses shattered by earthquakes, or falling into decay, and this provision was stringently enforced even when the rain-swollen torrents and miry roads of winter made obedience to it most burdensome<sup>1</sup>. It is by slight hints like these as to the condition of the rural population, that we are enabled to understand the rapid success of the Saracens in Syria, two centuries and a half after the period with which we are now dealing. These simple-hearted country folk with their Aramaic speech are in the year 387 still Christian by religious profession, but they are out of sympathy with Greek civilisation and are hardly dealt with by Roman functionaries. Bitter controversies and stern persecutions in the fifth and sixth centuries will alienate many of them from the form of faith dominant at Constantinople; and when in the seventh century a great Semitic prophet shall arise to reassert the principle of the unity of God and to declare a religious war against the Roman Empire, they will offer scanty resistance to the sword of Khalid, and will after the lapse of one generation be counted among the most obedient followers of Islam.

Arrival of  
the taxa-  
tion edict  
at Antioch.

Such then was the condition of the people in and around Antioch when, in the beginning of 387, the letters arrived from Theodosius ordering a levy of *aurum coronarium* for his son's Quinquennialia. It

<sup>1</sup> Libanius, *περὶ τῶν ἀγγαριῶν* (quoted by Sievers, p. 167).

was felt that this was too much; and an angry growl was heard through all the ranks of the citizens. Men rushed up to one another in the market-place, saying, 'Our life is become unliveable; the city is quite ruined; no one will be able to bear such a weight of tribute.' So did the 'grave and reverend signors,' the men on whom the weight of taxation would fall most heavily, utter their discontent; and in their exasperation they probably used many a word bordering on treason. Meanwhile the mob, among whom there were many boys, and all of whom had the spirit of boyish mischief in their hearts, proceeded from words to deeds. Streaming along the great colonnade which ran past the judgment-hall, having thrown off their upper garments to show that they meant work, they lifted their right arms menacingly in the air calling on all brave men to join them. They went first to the public baths, and severing with their swords the ropes by which the great brazen lamps were suspended they let them fall with a crash to the pavement.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

387.  
Circa  
4 March<sup>1</sup>.

Then the statues of the Imperial family met their eyes and inflamed their wrath. Here was the Emperor himself with that stately presence of his which seemed to command the obedience of Goth and of Roman. By his side was the gentle and pious Flaccilla, the wife whom he had lost two years before. Here was his

Overthrow  
of the Im-  
perial  
statues.

<sup>1</sup> The date of the outbreak of the sedition was fixed by Tillemont at 26 February, and Clinton in the main agrees with him. But Hug, finding that the passage in the Second Homily of St. Chrysostom, which would fix its deliverance on the eighth day after the sedition, is marked by the latest editor as spurious, makes the date of the sedition a week later, 4th of March instead of 26th of February. The dates of the subsequent events (most of which are only approximate) are those assigned by Hug.



BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

387.

noble old father, the pacifier of Britain and of Africa; and here was the young Arcadius, the boy of ten years old for whose Quinquennalia all this weight of 'coronary gold' was demanded, and there was the little Honorius, a child of three, not yet Augustus, but already glorified with a statue. The whole family were for the moment hateful in the eyes of the men of Antioch. With ribald shouts and words which a loyal orator<sup>1</sup> could not repeat and wished that he had never heard, they began to stone the wooden statues. There was a roar of laughter as each statue fell in ludicrous ruin, a roar of rage when one, more strongly compacted than its neighbour, resisted the onslaught. From the wooden statues they proceeded to those of brass. As stone-throwing here availed not, they tied ropes round the necks of the Imperial family, dragged them from their pedestals, smashed them as well as they could into fragments, and dragged the scattered members about the streets.

Fire-  
raising.

There was a certain leading citizen who, as the mob felt, viewed these seditious proceedings with disapproval. To his house they rushed and threw fire into it, fire which if it could once have got a head would have destroyed the neighbouring palace of the Emperor. But now at last the chief officer of the garrison, a man well trained in war, but who had been completely cowed by this outburst of popular fury, recovered his nerve, ordered his archers to the rescue, extinguished the flames, and by a few discharges of arrows utterly quelled the rioters. Another officer (perhaps the *Comes Orientis*) when he heard that the archers were called out, plucked up his courage and brought his companies of infantry

The out-  
break  
suppressed.<sup>1</sup> Libanius.

to assist in restoring order<sup>1</sup>. The rioters who were caught in the act of incendiarism were committed to prison; the rest of the roaring crowd melted silently away: by noon Antioch was quiet again, and men had leisure to bethink them what had been done, and what punishment would fall upon the city.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

On the audacious criminals who had been caught red-handed in the act of firing the city punishment, cruel in form, but, in essence, not unmerited, promptly descended. On the third day after the insurrection, Chrysostom, describing the fate of these lawless ones, said<sup>2</sup>, 'Some have perished by fire, others by the sword, others have been thrown to the wild beasts, and these, not men only, but boys also. Neither the unripeness of their age, nor the popular tumult, nor the fact that Devils tempted them to their mad outbreak, nor the intolerable burden of the taxes imposed, nor their poverty, nor the general assent of the citizens to the crime, nor their promise never to offend again—none of these pleas has availed them, but, without chance of pardon, they have been hurried off to the place of execution<sup>3</sup>, armed soldiers guarding them on all sides to prevent the possibility of a rescue. Mothers followed afar off beholding their sons dragged away and not daring even to bewail their calamity.'

Summary  
punish-  
ment.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ο δὲ ἄρχων τῶν ἐθνῶν ὡς ἤκουσε τοξότας ἤκοντας, ἐπὶ τοὺς τὸ πῦρ προσ-  
άγοντας ἤκέ τε αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τῶν λόχων εἰσήνεγκε. Liban. Or. xii.  
Sievers (p. 175) suggests that the officer here named was Comes  
Orientis. To me the commander of some corps of barbarian *foederati*  
would have seemed more probable.

<sup>2</sup> Homily 3, p. 45 (ed. Montfaucon). Libanius also mentions  
'fire, the sword, and the mouths of wild beasts' as the instruments of  
death (Oratio xii, ad Theodosium, p. 397, ed. Morel).

<sup>3</sup> Barathrum.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.

387.  
Anxiety of  
the citi-  
zens.

The law of  
Laesa  
Majestas.

But severe as were these punishments inflicted on the most conspicuous rioters, there ran through all ranks of the community a vague presentiment that the matter would not end there. Messengers had at once started off for Constantinople to inform the Emperor of what had occurred, and the citizens shivered with fear when they thought what answer those messengers might possibly bring back with them. The insult to the Imperial dignity contained in the overthrow of the statues had been gross and palpable. All who had abetted or even connived at it were clearly liable to the tremendous penalties denounced against 'Laesa Majestas,' the Roman equivalent of High Treason. When, under Tiberius, the fashion of currying favour with the Emperors by lodging accusations of 'Majestas' against eminent citizens was raging most fiercely, if a man had beaten his slave, or changed his clothes, in the presence of the Emperor's statue, or if even in intoxication he had seemed to treat despitefully a ring bearing the Emperor's effigy, these were sufficient offences upon which to ground the terrible indictment<sup>1</sup>. Possibly under later Emperors this fanaticism of adulation had somewhat subsided; but the statues of the reigning sovereign remained the visible expression of his majesty, raised (as we saw in the case of Maximus) when an usurper was recognised as legitimate ruler, hurled to the ground with ignominy when the fortune of war had declared against him. Woe therefore to the presumptuous mortal who laid a sacrilegious hand upon the effigy of the undethroned Emperor. The chapter

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, Tiberius 58, and Seneca, de Beneficiis iii. 26, are the two chief authorities for this extraordinary development of 'laesa majestas.'

in the Digest<sup>1</sup> which comments on the law of Treason devotes two out of its eleven paragraphs to this very question. 'A man is *not* guilty of treason who repairs the statues of Caesar which have decayed through age. Nor is one, who by the chance throw of a stone has hit a statue, guilty of the crime of treason; so Severus and Antoninus (Caracalla) ruled in their rescript to Julius Cassianus. The same Emperors decided that there was no injury to "majestas" in selling the images of Caesar which had not yet been consecrated. But they who shall melt down the statues or images of the Emperor which have been already consecrated or commit any similar act, are subject to the penalties of the Lex Julia Majestatis.'

BOOK I.  
Ch. 9.  
387.

That 'Majesty' had been 'injured' therefore in the colonnades of Antioch there could be no question, but the active perpetrators of the insult, notwithstanding the tender years of some of them, had already expiated this crime by fire, by sword, by the cruel teeth of the lions. The question now, the terrible question for the substantial citizens of Antioch, was how far they had made that crime their own by their tacit acquiescence. Thus was the case stated by the great preacher who put their dark forebodings into words<sup>2</sup>: 'Lo! we, whose conscience acquits us of having had any share in the outrage, are not less in fear of the Emperor's wrath than the actual criminals. For it sufficeth us not to say in our defence, "I was not present; I was not assisting; I was not a partaker in the crime." "For that very reason," he may say, "thou shalt be punished,

Were  
others be-  
side the  
actual  
stone-  
throwers  
to be  
punished?

<sup>1</sup> xlviii. 4. Ad legem Juliam Majestatis.

<sup>2</sup> St. Chrysostom, Homily 2 (p. 25).

BOOK I. because thou wast *not* present. Thou didst not hinder  
 CH. 9. the lawless ones. Thou didst not help to repress the  
 387. tumult. Thou didst not put thy life at hazard for the  
 honour of the Emperor." "

At the distance of more than fifteen centuries it is hopeless to re-try the case of the burgesses of Antioch and to decide whether they were or were not guilty of connivance in the outrage on the Imperial dignity. The whole affair occupied only a few hours of a March morning; and it is clear that there was no premeditated revolt against the Emperor. But all men were taken by surprise. The wealthy burghers certainly showed an utter want of presence of mind and a cowardly unwillingness to face the mob. Perhaps their fault ended here, but the impression made upon my own mind is that there was something more than this; a certain disposition to stand on one side and allow this extravagant Spaniard who was making life unliveable by his ceaseless demands for money to fight his own battles and defend his throne against these roaring insurgents without the aid of the citizens<sup>1</sup>.

Bishop  
 Flavian  
 undertakes  
 a mission  
 of inter-  
 cession.

In their dismay at what had been done and fear of the consequences, the citizens of Antioch turned to the Church for aid. In fact, on the fatal morning itself, when the letters of the Emperor were read, the first impulse of the people had been to visit the house of Bishop Flavian and ask his counsel and intercession; and it was only when they had failed in finding him at home that the movement had passed from lamen-

<sup>1</sup> In fact, something like the attitude of the tax-provoked Israelites at Shechem: 'What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: *now see to thine own house, David*' (1 Kings xii. 16).



tation to mutiny<sup>1</sup>. Now, they again and more earnestly sought the aid of the venerable prelate, the successor of Meletius, the man whose election had indirectly led to the abdication by Gregory Nazianzen of the Episcopal throne of Constantinople, but who had, by this time, lived down the opposition to his episcopate and was evidently not accepted merely, but beloved by the vast majority of the Christians of Antioch. Flavian was in advanced age, and broken health, little fitted to endure the fatigues and hardships of a journey of 800 miles across the highlands of Asia Minor in the beginning of March. Moreover, his only sister, who dwelt with him in the ancestral mansion, was lying on her death-bed, and her one most earnest longing was that he might be with her when her last hour came. But rising above all these excuses for inactivity the noble old man, thinking only of the words, 'The good shepherd giveth his life for the flock,' cheerfully accepted the mission to the Court<sup>2</sup> of Theodosius, there to plead for an indulgent view of the crime of the citizens of Antioch. He started apparently about the 6th of March, and already on the 10th of that month the citizens were comforted by the news that their Bishop, the messenger of reconciliation, was likely to catch up the other travellers, the messengers of wrath, who had started as if with wings to their heels, but had been so delayed—possibly by snow in the passes of Taurus—that they were still only in the middle of their journey,

<sup>1</sup> Libanius mentions this (*Oratio* xii. p. 395), and his testimony on this point is more valuable than St. Chrysostom's.

<sup>2</sup> In speaking of this mission, St. Chrysostom always speaks of it as *εἰς τὸ στρατόπεδον*, 'to the camp,' one amid many illustrations that the dominant conception of the Emperor's office was the military one.

BOOK I.

CH. 9.

387.

Miserable  
condition  
of the city.

having been obliged to dismount from their horses and travel by the slower conveyance of chariots, drawn probably by mules<sup>1</sup>.

For more than twenty days the silence of an awful suspense brooded over the once light-hearted city of Antioch<sup>2</sup>. Many of the citizens left their homes and took up their abodes in deserts and in caves in the wild gorges of Mount Silpius. The Forum, once loud with the din of buyers and sellers or bright with the robes of revellers, was empty and desolate. If a citizen, to shake off the melancholy which weighed upon him at home, walked abroad in the Forum, so gloomy was the aspect of the place, where he saw only one or two of his fellow-

<sup>1</sup> Possibly, however, this was a false rumour (as Hug suggests), for the Bishop seems to have met the Imperial Commissaries on their journey to Antioch (St. Chrys. Homily 21, p. 216), and this, of course, must have been preceded by the arrival of the first messengers at Constantinople. But if they got over their difficulties and pushed on rapidly on horseback after the Bishop had overtaken them, both accounts will be consistent.

<sup>2</sup> 'Now, to their thinking, were their former fears of the ruin of Mansoul confirmed. Now what death they should die, and how long they should be in dying, was that which most perplexed their heads and hearts. Yea, they were afraid that Emmanuel would command them all into the deep . . . for they knew that they had deserved it.'

'Presently, they that had heard what was said flew about the town, one crying one thing and another the quite contrary. One would say, "We must all be killed"; another would say, "We must all be saved," and a third would say that the Prince would not be concerned with Mansoul, and a fourth that the prisoners must suddenly be put to death. Nay, some of them had got this story by the end, that the Prince did intend to put Mansoul to the sword. And now it began to be dark, wherefore poor Mansoul was in sad perplexity all that night until the morning.' These sentences from Bunyan's *Holy War* (chap. viii.), and many more which might be quoted, read like a transcript of the Homilies of Chrysostom, though we might probably affirm with safety that Bunyan had never heard of the Insurrection of Antioch.

citizens creeping about, with cowed looks and crouching frames, that he soon returned to the less depressing solitude of his home. There he sat, a free man, but as it were in fetters, dreading the entry of an informer or of the lictors who would drag him off to prison. As no friends visited him, he would pass the time in conversation with his slaves, conversation which turned on such dreary topics as these, 'Who has been seized? Who has been carried off to prison? Who has been punished to-day, and what was the manner of the punishment?'

In the city thus abandoned to gloom there was but one place in which words of comfort and hope resounded. In the pulpit of the great church built by Constantine there stood, day after day, the slight figure of Chrysostom, a broad-browed man, with deep-set eyes, pleading with the overflowing congregations which flocked to the church—it was now the season of Lent—to put off their vices, their luxury, and their worldliness, and to meet with brave hearts whatever the future might have in store for them. One sin against which, with a persistency which is almost amusing, he warns his hearers is that of oaths lightly and frivolously sworn. If a slave made some mistake in waiting at table, the mistress of the house would swear that she would have him flogged, and her husband would swear that the stripes should not be inflicted. Thus, one or other of the discordant pair must commit perjury. A tutor would swear that his pupil should taste no food till he had learned a certain lesson, and when the sun was descending on the still unfinished task, the tutor found himself shut up to one of two alternatives, perjury or murder. Almost every one of the nineteen homilies

Sermons of  
St. Chry-  
sostom.

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrysostom, Hom. 2, p. 22.

BOOK I. which the 'golden-mouthed' preacher delivered during  
 CH. 9. these eventful weeks concludes with an earnest exhorta-  
 387. tion to abstain from profane swearing.

One day, probably in the third week of Lent, the  
 Visit of the Praetorian Prefect of the East <sup>1</sup> himself came in state  
 Prefect to the church. He recognised that there was in the  
 Circa great preacher's discourses the best medicine for the  
 20 March. nervous, panic-stricken, dispirited condition of the  
 public mind; and in order to prevent the city from  
 being depopulated through sheer terror he came to  
 give the sanction of the civil magistrate's presence  
 to the soothing and hopeful words of the ecclesiastic.  
 'I praise,' said Chrysostom <sup>2</sup>, 'the forethought of  
 the Prefect, who, seeing the city in bewilderment,  
 and all talking about flight, has come in hither to  
 comfort you and turn you to good hope again; but  
 I do not praise you, that after all my sermons you  
 should still need these assurances to deliver you from  
 cowardice. You are a prey to panic terrors. Some  
 one enters and tells you that the soldiers are going  
 to break in upon you. Instead of falling into a  
 paroxysm of fear, calmly tell the messenger of evil  
 tidings to depart, and do you seek the Lord in prayer.'  
 Towards the close of the same sermon, in dwelling  
 on the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly  
 riches, the preacher says, 'If you have money, many  
 may rob you of the pleasure which it affords you;  
 the thief digging through your house-wall, the slave  
 embezzling what was entrusted to him, the Emperor  
 confiscating, the informer delating.' It had come to

<sup>1</sup> 'Ο ἀρχων: possibly the Comes Orientis, but more likely the Praefectus Praetorio.

<sup>2</sup> Homily 16, p. 160.

this, therefore, that in the ordinary social life of the capital of Asia, the Emperor's terrible demands for money could be classed, by a loyal and orthodox preacher, with the crimes of the house-breaker and the defaulting slave as a chief source of anxiety to the wealthy householder.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

So the days wore on. In the city, men were living in an agony of fear, so great that, as the preacher said, if but a leaf moved it set them trembling for days. In the mountains, the refugees were suffering all manner of hardships; not grown men only, but little children and tender and delicate women, spent their days and nights in caves and hollow ravines, and some fell a prey to the wild beasts of the desert<sup>1</sup>.

At length, about twenty-five days after the tumult, the Emperor's commissioners arrived. Their names were Caesarius and Hellebichus. Caesarius probably already held the high position of Master of the Offices<sup>2</sup>. Hellebichus (or Ellebichus), whose name surely indicates a barbarian, perhaps a Gothic, origin, had been for at least three years Master of the Horse and Foot quartered in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. He had previously held either that or a similar command at Antioch, and had endeared himself to the inhabitants by his humane and temperate demeanour. It was accepted as a good omen by all the trembling hearts in Antioch that he should have been chosen as a member of the dreaded tribunal<sup>3</sup>. Of Caesarius less was known,

Arrival of  
the Empe-  
ror's Com-  
missioners.  
Circa  
29 March.

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrysostom, Homily 21, pp. 221, 222.

<sup>2</sup> Which he certainly possessed in 389.

<sup>3</sup> A letter of Gregory Nazianzen to Hellebichus is preserved. The saint regrets that his weak health prevents him from visiting the soldier 'and renewing our ancient friendship and intercourse.' He asks him to give a discharge from the army to the young Mamas



BOOK I. but he appears to have been a man who was capable of  
CH. 9. a generous and self-sacrificing sympathy with misfortune.

387.  
 Punish-  
 ment to be  
 inflicted on  
 the city. The decree which these men brought with them was a stern one, and nothing can show the misery of despair which had fallen upon the inhabitants of the joyous city more vividly than the fact that even such a decree should have been almost welcomed as a relief from the intolerable agony of suspense. The Theatre and the Hippodrome, which had been temporarily closed since the fatal outbreak, were not to be reopened; the baths were to be also closed; the grain-largesses which Antioch had hitherto shared with Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople were to cease; and, bitterest drop in the cup to the vanity of the Antiochenes, their city was to lose her high place among the 'great cities' of the Empire, and to take rank henceforth as a dependent of Laodicea, her petty rival on the sea-coast some sixty-five miles to the south. Even so might Paris, after the war of the Commune in 1871, have been made permanently subject to Versailles.

Further  
 judicial  
 proceedings  
 to be taken. Still, as has been said, even these rigorous decrees were received with a sigh of relief by the citizens of Antioch. It was something that life was left to them, that their city was not to be levelled to the dust for its outrage on the Emperor. But would even life, much less property, be left to them? That was the question which began to torment the wealthier citizens, the Senators of Antioch, when Caesarius and Hellebichus took their seats in the Hall of Judgment and opened their Commission, for the trial, not now of the street-boys and vagabonds of the Forum who had actually whose father was a soldier, but who is himself consecrated to the service of God as a 'lector' (Ep. 225).

thrown the stones and dragged the dismembered statues about the streets, but of those important and respectable persons who were theoretically the rulers of the city, and who, either from cowardice or disaffection, had let the tumult rage and roar past them without lifting a hand to save the Majesty of the Emperor from outrage. These were the men whom Theodosius had determined at least to terrify, possibly to destroy, as an atonement to the insulted memory of his wife and father.

The Commissioners seem to have arrived at Antioch on Monday the 29th of March. On the 30th they held a preliminary enquiry at the lodgings of Hellebichus, an enquiry which, like all their subsequent proceedings, dealt chiefly with the Senate and with those who held or had held municipal offices in the city. On Wednesday the 31st they took their seats in due form in the Praetorium, surrounded by their lictors, with a strong guard of soldiers outside, and opened 'the dread tribunal which shook all the hearts of the citizens with terror, and made the day seem black as night through the sadness and fear which dimmed the eyes of all men<sup>1</sup>.' In accordance with an old custom at Antioch, criminal trials had to take place at night in order to strike more awe into the hearts of the accused. The Commissioners so far complied with this custom as to begin their proceedings before dawn, but soon the sun rose upon their gloomy work, revealing the cowering multitude without, the stern executioners at their cruel work within. The main object of the Commissioners was to extort confessions of complicity with the insurgents (whether in order to magnify the future clemency of the Emperor or to furnish a pretext for fines and con-

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

Proceed-  
ings at the  
trial.

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom, Homily 13, p. 133.

BOOK I. fiscations it is not now easy to determine); and in order  
CH. 9.  
387. to obtain these confessions, torture was freely applied to the leading citizens of Antioch. Chrysostom, who spent that memorable day in the precincts of the Praetorium, draws a vivid picture of the scene. The miserable remnant of the joyous multitude of the city was gathered round the doors in silence, with not even the ordinary platitudes of conversation passing between the by-standers, for each man feared an informer in his neighbour. Only each looked up to Heaven and silently prayed God to soften the hearts of the judges.

Still more gloomy was the sight in the Audience Chamber of the Praetorium; stern soldiers, armed with swords and clubs, tramping up and down amid a crowd of women, the wives, mothers, and daughters of the accused, who were waiting in agonised suspense to learn the fate of their relatives. There were two especially, the mother and sister of a Senator of high rank, who lay on the very threshold of the innermost hall, spreading out their hands in vain entreaty towards the unseen powers within. There they lay, these women, used to the delicate ministrations of waiting-maids and eunuchs, and accustomed to the semi-Oriental seclusion of a Syrian *thalamus*. No servant, or friend, or neighbour was there to soothe the anguish of their souls, as they lay grovelling upon the ground, unveiled, before the eyes, and almost under the feet, of a brutal soldiery.

And from within, from the dread hall itself, into which not even the preacher might enter, came terrible sounds, the harsh voices of the stolid executioners, the swish of stripes, the wailings of the tortured, the

tremendous threats of the judges. But the agony outside, thought the orator, was even more terrible than the agony within. For as it was well known that the indictments would be framed on the information thus extracted by torture, when the ladies in the hall of waiting heard the moans of some relative who was being scourged to make him declare his accomplices, they looked up to Heaven and prayed God to give him fortitude that he might not in his anguish utter words which would bring another beloved one into trouble. 'Thus were there torments within, torments without; the torturers within were the executioners; without, the feelings of nature and the wringing of the heart with pity and fear.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

All the long day through the judges proceeded with their dreadful work, apparently unmoved by the prayers and tears of those by whom they were surrounded. Yet this apathy was in truth but a mask to conceal their real feelings. Towards sunset the orator Libanius ventured to approach the suppliant-crowded door. Fearing to intrude, he was about to move away again, when Caesarius, with whom he had some previous acquaintance, pushed through the throng to meet him, and, taking him in a friendly manner by the wrist, assured him that none of those who were then imprisoned should suffer death. All other possible punishments seemed light after this assurance, and Libanius wept for joy on receiving it. He descended into the streets and imparted the comforting tidings to the crowd.

But if the extreme penalty of the law was not to be inflicted there was every sign of a determination to treat with sternness the crimes, voluntary or in-

Harsh  
treatment  
of the  
Senators.



BOOK I. voluntary, of the Senators of Antioch. They were all  
CH. 9.  
 387. loaded with chains and led through the Forum to the  
 gaol; men (as Chrysostom reflected, on beholding the  
 dismal procession) who had been accustomed to drive  
 their own chariots, who were the givers of games and  
 the furnishers of countless brilliant 'liturgies' to the  
 people. But these men's properties were for the time  
 confiscated, and you might see the government sign  
 affixed to all their doors. Their wives, turned out of  
 their ancestral homes, wandered from house to house,  
 begging a night's lodging in vain, for all men feared to  
 receive a relation of the accused or to minister to any  
 of their needs. Such was the abject terror with which  
 the inhabitants of a great Imperial city regarded the  
 wrath of the Emperor.

Irruption  
 of hermits  
 into the  
 city.

While the citizens were thus displaying the mean-  
 ness and selfishness of fear, a strange swarm of visitors  
 appeared in their streets, as if to show by contrast what  
 courage and what generous sympathy for the woes of  
 others could be found in the hearts of men who had  
 voluntarily renounced all that makes life delightful.  
 These were the hermits who lived in the caves and  
 fastnesses of the rocks in the mountain range which  
 overhung the city. No one had invited them, but when  
 they heard, probably from the refugees, of the cloud of  
 doom which was hanging over Antioch, they left their  
 tents and their caves and flocked into the city from  
 all quarters. At another time their vile raiment and  
 uncouth demeanour would probably have moved the  
 laughter of the citizens, but now they were welcomed  
 as guardian angels floating down from heaven. Fear-  
 less of the great ones of the earth, they went straight  
 to the Commissioners and pleaded confidently for the



accused. They were all ready they said to shed their blood that they might deliver the prisoners from the woes that impended over them <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

One of the wildest and most awe-inspiring of these strange figures was 'the holy Macedonius, a man totally ignorant of all learning, sacred or profane, who passed his nights and his days on the top of a mountain, engaged in all but unintermitting prayer to the Saviour of mankind.' Meeting Hellebichus riding in martial pomp through the city, accompanied by Caesarius, he laid his hand upon the officer's military cloak, and desired him and his companions to dismount. At first they resented this language, coming from a stunted old man of mean appearance and clad in rags. But when the by-standers informed them of the virtue and holiness of the strange figure that stood before them, the Master of the Soldiery and the Master of the Offices dismounted from their horses, and clasping his sun-browned knees implored his pardon. Filled as with a prophet's inspiration the squalid mountaineer thus addressed them, 'Go, my friends, to the Emperor, and say to him, "You are not only an Emperor but a man, and you have to think of human nature as well as of the Imperial dignity. Man was made in the image of God: do not then order that image to be destroyed and so offend the great Artificer. You are making all this stir about bronze statues which it is easy to replace, but if you kill men for the sake of these statues not one hair of their heads can be remade <sup>2</sup>."'

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrysostom, Homily 17, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> The speech of Macedonius is given by St. Chrysostom (Homily 17), but we get his name and the description of his character from Theodoret (Ecclesiastical Hist. v. 20).

BOOK I.

CH. 9.

387.

Such were the pleadings of Macedonius. Others of the hermits entreated that they might be sent as ambassadors to the Emperor. 'The man,' said they, 'who bears rule over the world, is a religious man, faithful and pious, and we shall surely reconcile him to his people. We will not permit you to stain the sword nor to take a single life. If you slay any of these men we are resolved that we will die with them. Great crimes have been committed, but not greater than the mercy of the Emperor can pardon.'

The Commissioners  
reassure  
the people.

The offer of the hermits to act as intercessors was gently but firmly declined by the Commissioners. Moved, however, by their rugged earnestness, and by the pitiful lamentations of the female relatives of the prisoners, the Commissioners repeated in a more public and emphatic manner the assurance already given to Libanius, that no capital sentence should be inflicted at any rate till the pleasure of the Emperor had been taken on the matter. On Thursday, the 1st of April, Caesarius departed, amid the prayers and blessings of the weeping inhabitants, to obtain, if it might be, some mitigation of the decree pronounced against the city, and to consult as to the nature of the punishment to be inflicted on the accused Senators.

Journey of  
Caesarius.

The road from Antioch to Constantinople was 790 Roman miles long; it crossed two steep mountain ranges and traversed arduous highlands. First of all Mount Amanus had to be over-passed and the deep Gulf of Scanderoon to be rounded; several Cilician rivers must be crossed and Cilician Tarsus visited. A long and steep pull carried the traveller over the rugged range of Taurus, and he then journeyed for many a stage down the widening valley of the Halys,

passing on his way the little town of Nazianzus, where St. Gregory was born, and the road-side station of Sasima, the scene of his undesired episcopate. A long journey across the Galatian highlands led him from the valley of the Halys, past the city of Ancyra (now Angora), into the valley of the Sangarius, from whence he crossed over to Nicaea of the famous Council, to Diocletian's Nicomedia, and so coasted along between the Bithynian Mountains and the Sea of Marmora till he entered the gates of Chalcedon, and saw the towers of Constantinople rising proudly in the west, the welcome goal of his journeyings. It was a distance of nearly 800 miles, as has been said, to traverse which, through regions wasted by Ottoman domination, would now occupy 230 hours or nearly ten days of absolutely continuous travel; but such was the zeal of Caesarius, inflamed by pity and the remembrance of the sad hearts which he had left behind him at Antioch, and such the goodness of the Roman roads fifteen centuries ago, that he accomplished the journey in six days, travelling therefore at the rate of 130 miles a day.

When Caesarius arrived in Constantinople to hand in his report and to plead for mercy to Antioch, he found that the ground had been well prepared for him by Bishop Flavian. There can be little doubt that the aged prelate (who must by this time have been at least a fortnight in Constantinople), had several interviews with the Emperor, though St. Chrysostom, for dramatic effect, describes them as one<sup>1</sup>. When Flavian entered the Palace he stood afar off from the Imperial presence, silent, weeping, crouching low and shrinking from ob-

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

Arrival of  
Caesarius  
at Constantinople.  
7 April.

Interviews  
of Flavian  
with the  
Emperor.

<sup>1</sup> In the 21st Homily. This point is well brought out by Hug (p. 23).

BOOK I. servation, as if it were he himself that had committed  
 CH. 9. the fatal outrages. By this well-calculated humility  
 387. he turned the Emperor's wrath into pity. Theodosius  
 drew near and addressed him rather in sorrow than in  
 anger, enumerating all the benefits which from the  
 beginning of his reign he had bestowed on ungrateful  
 Antioch. He had ever longed to visit her, yea, had  
 sworn to do so; but even if he himself had deserved  
 ever so ill of the citizens, surely they might have  
 confined their anger to the living. Why wreak their  
 vengeance on the innocent dead, on the brave old  
 general and the gentle Empress who had passed away  
 from earth?

At this the Bishop groaned and shed more tears, and  
 with a heavy sigh (for he saw that the Emperor's  
 gentle expostulation was making Antioch's case seem  
 all the worse) he began, confessing the Imperial benefits,  
 lamenting the vile ingratitude of the inhabitants, and  
 admitting that if the city were swept from the face of  
 the earth, it would not be punished more severely than  
 it deserved. Then he proceeded to open a line of  
 defence, which both the heathen and the Christian  
 apologists for Antioch united in maintaining. The  
 insurrection—said both Libanius and Chrysostom—  
 was not the work of the Antiochenes themselves in  
 their sober senses, but was due to demons, jealous of  
 the prosperity of the city, who had assumed the guise  
 of men, and mingling with the crowd on that fatal  
 morning had goaded them to madness. Libanius in his  
 oration (of which a copy had perhaps been transmitted  
 to the Emperor by Caesarius), gravely tells the story of  
 a certain old man, displaying more than an old man's  
 strength, who rode up and down among the rioters,

The out-  
 rages said  
 to be the  
 work of  
 demons.

urging them on to the work of demolition, and who, when the cry was raised 'Well done, old man <sup>1</sup>!' changed himself, under the eyes of many beholders, into a youth, then into a boy, and then vanished into thin air. This singular story may not have been related by the weeping Bishop to the Emperor, but he certainly did allude to the demons' jealousy of the glory of Antioch and of her sovereign's love for her, and besought him to foil that envious scheme, and by the exercise of his Imperial clemency to re-erect for himself a statue more glorious than any that had been overthrown, a statue not of gold, nor brass, nor precious mosaic-work, but his own likeness in the hearts of his subjects. 'It is said,' continued Flavian, 'that the blessed Constantine, when his effigy had been stoned by the mob, and when his friends, urging him to avenge the insult, told him that all the face of the statue was marred by the impact of the stones, calmly stroked his own face with his hand, and said with a laugh, "I can find no wound in my forehead. My head and my face appear to be quite uninjured." A noble saying this, one not forgotten by after generations, and tending more to the renown of Constantine than even the cities which he founded, and the victories which he gained over the barbarians.'

'Think that you have now not merely the fate of one city in your hands, but that the whole credit of Christianity is at stake. All nations are watching you, Jews and Gentiles alike, and if you show humanity in this case, they will all cry "*Papae!*" what a wonderful thing is the power of this Christianity; that a man who has no equal upon earth, absolute lord of all men, to

<sup>1</sup> Oration xii. p. 396, ed. Morel.



BOOK I. save or to destroy, should have so restrained himself  
 CH. 9. and exhibited a degree of philosophy which would have  
 387. been rare even in a private person."

'Think, too, what a thing it will be for posterity to hear, that when so great a city was lying prostrate under fear of the coming vengeance; when generals, prefects and judges were all struck dumb with horror, one old man, wearing the robes of a priest of God, by his mere appearance and conversation, moved the Emperor to an indulgence which none of his other subjects could obtain from him<sup>1</sup>.'

When Flavian had finished his earnest supplication, Theodosius, we are told, like Joseph, sought a place where to weep apart. It was to a mind softened by interviews such as this, that Caesarius, the Master of the Offices, brought the tidings of the abject self-humiliation of the city, of his own harsh measures towards the Senators, and the recommendation to mercy jointly put forward by himself and his colleague. Theodosius, who had probably been only waiting for this advice to be given by his Commissioners, seems to have gladly accepted it, and at once 'pronounced the sweet word "pardon," which became him better than any diadem<sup>2</sup>.' The previous decree was to be rescinded, Antioch was to resume all her forfeited privileges, the imprisoned Senators were to be set free and their confiscated property restored to them.

Antioch  
 pardoned.

<sup>1</sup> I do not transcribe, because I do not believe in Flavian's alleged threat that if Theodosius would not pardon Antioch, he would never return thither. This strange menace seems to me more in keeping with the somewhat feminine character of Chrysostom than with the rugged simplicity of Flavian

<sup>2</sup> It is needless to quote the well-known parallel passage from Shakespeare.

The grateful Flavian offered to remain at Constantinople a few days longer, in order to share the Easter-feast of gladness with the reconciled Emperor. But Theodosius, whose whole mind seemed now set on pardon, begged him to return at once and show himself to his flock. 'I know,' said he, 'their downcast souls. Do you go and comfort them. When they see their pilot once more in his wonted place at the helm, the bitter memory of the storm will pass away.' The Bishop importuned him to let the young Arcadius return with him as a visible pledge that the Imperial anger was abated. 'Not now,' said Theodosius. 'Pray ye that these obstacles may be removed, that these impending wars [alluding, no doubt, to the inevitable war with Maximus] may be extinguished, and I will come myself without delay.' Even after the Bishop had departed, and had crossed the Bosphorus to Chalcedon, the Emperor sent messengers beseeching him to lose no time on the road, lest he should diminish the pleasure of the citizens by celebrating Easter anywhere else than within their walls. Generously foregoing, as also did Caesarius, the delight of being the first to communicate the glad-tidings, Flavian detached a horseman from his train, and bade him ride on fast and take the joyful letters of pardon to the city.

The three weeks which had elapsed since the departure of Caesarius had, naturally, been a time of suspense and discouragement for the citizens of Antioch. The absolute closing of all places of amusement weighed on the spirits of the people, the closed doors of the great baths subjected them to bodily privations which seemed almost intolerable. The city-mob streamed down to the banks of the arrowy Orontes, and

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

State of Antioch during the last three weeks of suspense. 1-22 (?), April.

BOOK I. there, with a disregard for decency, for which St. Chry-  
CH. 9.  
 387. sostom severely rebuked them<sup>1</sup>, bathed amid ribald songs and demoralising laughter, and with no proper provision for the separation of the sexes.

The Sena-  
 tors in  
 prison.

Meanwhile the Fathers of the city were still languishing in the prison, the discomforts of which had been often, in previous years, pointed out to them by Libanius. He had in vain told them that the prisoners had hardly room to stretch themselves for slumber, that they had but the scantiest provision of food except what their friends supplied to them, and only a single lamp, for which they had to pay a high price to the gaoler<sup>2</sup>. Into this miserable dungeon the untried as well as the convicted prisoners were crowded together, and thousands of both classes had died in recent years of the diseases thus engendered. The Senators, who had turned a deaf ear to all Libanius' pleas for Prison Reform, had now an opportunity of learning by bitter experience how greatly it was needed. The courtyard in which they were imprisoned had no roof to cover it from the scorching rays of the noonday sun, nor to protect it from the April showers and the dews of night. Here, crowded so closely together that they trod one on another, with sleep made almost impossible, with food only to be snatched at irregular intervals, as the friends of each might succeed in shouldering their way through the crowd to bring it to them, languished the Senators of Antioch. So miserable was their duration, that it seemed doubtful whether they would be alive to hear the news of pardon when it came. But the gentle-hearted Hellebichus, though powerless to

<sup>1</sup> Homily 18, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> See Sievers, Libanius, p. 171.

change the decree for their imprisonment, connived at its alleviation. He caused the wall which divided the Senate House from the Prison to be pierced through, and thus the unhappy captives found room and shelter in the halls which had often resounded with their deliberations.

BOOK I.  
CH. 9.  
387.

But all these hardships, and all the long suspense of the city on the Orontes were ended, when on one of the days of Holy Week the horseman sent forward by Flavian rode through the Northern Gate shouting that one word 'Pardon.' When the Imperial letter to Hellebichus was read, and when the citizens learned how full was the measure of the Imperial forgiveness, that the baths, the theatres, and the hippodrome were to be re-opened, the corn-largesses restored, Antioch again to take her own high place as a first city of the East, they crowned the pillars of the forum with garlands, they lighted lamps in all the streets, spread couches before the workshops, and laid out the banqueting tables in front of them. Thus the city wore all the appearance of one of the joyous old *lectisternia* of republican Rome, except that, doubtless, the recumbent statues of the gods Jupiter, Juno, and Ceres were absent from the streets of Christian Antioch—more Christian now than ever, since the mitigation of a great calamity had been obtained by the prayers of a Christian Bishop addressed to a Christian Emperor. In the great Basilica which had been the refuge of the citizens in their dire distress, there was now celebrated such a glad Easter feast as Antioch had never seen before. Flavian was there, unharmed by his sixteen hundred miles of journeying, and having had the joy of finding his sister still alive, and able to exchange a last

Arrival of  
the news of  
pardon.  
Circa  
22 April.

BOOK I. farewell. Chrysostom, of course, ascended the pulpit,  
CH. 9.  
387. and told all the story of the interview between the Bishop and the Emperor. The agony of the city was over, and the great series of 'the Homilies on the Statues' was ended <sup>1</sup>.

It remains only to be said that the visit of Theodosius to the forgiven city was apparently never paid. The war with Maximus, the necessity of setting in order the affairs of Italy, the second civil war which will shortly have to be described, prevented the fulfilment of the design, if it had ever been seriously entertained by Theodosius. Only eight years after the affair of the statues, Antioch was to see from her walls the hosts of the savage Huns spreading ruin and desolation over the pleasant plains of Syria <sup>2</sup>.

Character  
 of Theo-  
 dosius as  
 illustrated  
 by these  
 events.

Such was the history of the crime and the forgiveness of Antioch. It is usually told as an instance of the generous magnanimity of Theodosius. It may be admitted that no blood appears to have been shed by his orders, and that the first outbreak of fierce resentment, which was almost justified by the insults heaped on his dead wife and his dead father, was amply repented of when he had leisure calmly to reflect on the excess of the punishment over the crime, and to listen to the wise pleadings of Flavian and Caesarius.

Let Theodosius, therefore, in the judgment of posterity, have the full credit which he deserves for his

<sup>1</sup> Except one (the 19th), which was delivered on the Sunday before Ascension Day.

<sup>2</sup> 'Syriae tractus vastantur amoeni

Assuetumque choris, et lætâ plebe canorum

Proterit imbellem sonipes hostilis Orontem.'

Claudian, In Rufinum ii. 33-35.



arrested wrath, for his unexecuted purposes of vengeance, although the historian cannot but perceive the difficulty of rightly estimating character, if uncommitted crimes are to be allowed to build up a saintly reputation. But the feeling which will probably be uppermost in the minds of those who study the history of the sedition of Antioch will be compassion for the hard fate of the Senators of that city. Burdened with responsibility, bereft of power, ground between the upper and nether mill-stones of the Emperor and the mob, these unhappy remnants of a once powerful middle class suffered that fate which will probably always be their portion under a system of Imperial Socialism. There was still in them something left to grind, but when they had been ground out of existence the Empire ceased to be.

BOOK 1.  
CH. 9.  
387.

Hard lot of  
the Senators  
of Antioch.

One other phenomenon of Imperial Rome, the story of the broken statues brings vividly before us, the unapproachable, the almost superhuman majesty of the man who happened to be robed in the purple of Empire. As St. Chrysostom said<sup>1</sup>, 'He whom the city of Antioch hath insulted hath not his fellow upon the earth, for he is Emperor, the head and crown of all things in the world. Therefore let us fly to the Heavenly King, and call on Him for aid: for if we cannot taste the compassion of the Lord on high, there is nothing in all the world that can help us when we think of that which we have done.'

Awful  
majesty of  
the Emperor.

<sup>1</sup> Homily 2, p. 23.

## CHAPTER X.

### THEODOSIUS IN ITALY AND THE MASSACRE OF THESSALONICA.

#### Authorities.

#### *Sources:—*

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

The materials for this chapter are chiefly derived from the letters of ST. AMBROSE, and the Church historians, especially SOZOMEN and THEODORET. It is singular that Zosimus, the bitter enemy of Theodosius, makes no allusion to the greatest blot on his character, his share in the massacre of Thessalonica.

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS is our chief, almost our sole authority for the social condition of Rome towards the end of the fourth century.

Theodosius  
and Am-  
brose.

THE chief interest for us of Theodosius' residence at Milan consists in the relation into which he was thus brought with the Bishop of that city, the eloquent and domineering Ambrose. These two men, the Emperor and the Bishop, were unquestionably the foremost figures of their age. They met now probably for the first time: they were destined to spend about three years in near neighbourhood with one another. A shrewd observer of character might perhaps have prognosticated that, earnest upholders as both were of Nicene orthodoxy, there would hardly be unbroken peace between two such lordly natures constrained to dwell in such close proximity.

Religious  
troubles  
at Callini-  
cum.

In fact a cause of difference presented itself almost at the beginning of the Emperor's residence in Italy.

The court of the East had sent a report to Theodosius as to certain disturbances which had taken place at Callinicum, a city on the Euphrates. The Christians had burned to the ground a richly-adorned synagogue of the Jews; and some orthodox monks who were celebrating (on the 1st of August) the festival of the Maccabean martyrs under Antiochus, had become engaged in a quarrel with the Gnostic heretics who bore the name of Valentinians, and had destroyed their 'temple' also by fire. On the receipt of this information Theodosius despatched a rescript to the effect that the Bishop of Callinicum should rebuild the Jewish synagogue at his own cost, and that punishment—we are not told of what kind—should be inflicted by the Eastern Count on the disorderly monks. The sentence appears, as far as we are able to judge of it, to have been a just one, and to have been dictated by a laudable spirit of impartiality. There was no doubt that a word from the Bishop would have checked the proceedings of the rioters; but, more than that, the nature of the defence set up for him by his most earnest advocate makes it probable that he had actually hounded them on to the work of destruction. The case was one which was entirely and absolutely within the province of the civil governor; no ecclesiastical right was involved in it; it was simply a question of the kind and degree of punishment which ought to be exacted from the disturbers of the public peace. The Bishop of Milan had no claim to express an opinion on the transaction, one way or the other, but, if he spoke at all, he, as a former Roman governor, who knew how by Law all things hang together in a well-ordered state, might have been expected to give a word of praise to the righteous

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.  
388.

Theodosius  
orders the  
orthodox  
to make  
restitution.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

388.

Ambrose  
disap-  
proves of  
the edict.

Emperor, who even against men of his own creed, upheld the claim of all peaceable citizens to live under the equal protection of the laws.

Unfortunately for his fame, this was not the view of the matter taken by Ambrose. His was a bold and combative spirit; he had become inured to battle against the great ones of the earth in his disputes with Justina and with Maximus; and from the day of his consecration he had thrown himself into the defence of the Church's rights, real or imaginary, with an ardour such as in after ages burned in a Becket or a Hildebrand. Being absent at Aquileia when the news of the Imperial rescript first reached him, he wrote to Theodosius a letter almost as arrogant in its tone as those which he had formerly addressed to the trembling Valentinian. In this letter he hardly so much entreats as commands the Emperor to recall the fatal edict and to desist from all further proceedings against the destroyers of a mere synagogue, 'the haunt of infidels, the home of the impious, the hiding-place of madmen, which was under the damnation of God Himself.' With proud humility he claims his right to offer counsel to his sovereign. 'The Emperor must not deny liberty of speech, nor the priest refrain from saying what he thinks.' He declares that the Bishop of Callinicum will be a traitor to his office if he obeys the Imperial decree and rebuilds the synagogue, and he anticipates that he will prefer martyrdom to such a betrayal. 'Why do you pronounce sentence on the absent? I am here present before you<sup>1</sup> and confess my guilt. I proclaim that I would have burned the synagogue: I would have given charge to my flock

<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, only a figure of speech.

that there must not be a house left standing in which Christ was denied. If you asked me why I have not already burned the synagogue here, I answer that its destruction had been already begun by the judgment of God<sup>1</sup>; and to tell the truth, I was the more tardy in doing such a deed because I did not know that you would punish it. Why should I perform an act for which there would, as I supposed, be no avenger and therefore no reward of martyrdom?’

This strangely defiant epistle seems to have been met by Theodosius with dignified silence; but shortly afterwards Ambrose, having come back to Milan, returned to the charge in a sermon which he preached before the Emperor. He reproduces this sermon and describes the occasion and consequences of its delivery in a long letter to his sister, whom, in accordance with the unctuous unnatural tone assumed by the saints of that age, he addresses as ‘your holiness.’ The sermon preached on this occasion in the Basilica of Milan, though not wanting in eloquence of a certain kind, consisted chiefly of a long and, according to our notions, a tedious commentary on the story of the woman in Simon’s house who bathed the Saviour’s feet with her tears. The exegesis is of that barrenly fanciful kind by which anything can be made out of anything; allegorical interpretation pushed to the verge of absurdity, and texts from the Canticles, from Exodus and Isaiah piled one upon another without any attempt to understand the thoughts which the original writers sought to convey through them. But at the end of this wearisome prelection the situation suddenly becomes dramatic. The preacher, with Theo-

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.  
—  
388.

He  
preaches  
against the  
Emperor.

<sup>1</sup> Had the Jewish synagogue at Milan been struck by lightning?



BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

388.

dosius full in front of him, draws a covert parallel between his life and that of King David, selecting the moment when the prophet Nathan stood before him to rebuke him for his crime against Uriah. 'Chosen when thou wert little in Israel and anointed to the kingship; that former king who was troubled by an evil spirit and who persecuted the priests of the Lord<sup>1</sup>, cut off that thou mightest be exalted; with one of thy seed exalted to be partner of thy throne; the strangers made subject unto thee and they who warred upon thee made thy servants; wilt thou now hand over God's soldiers into the power of their enemies? wilt thou brand thyself with shame and give the adversaries occasion to triumph by taking away that which belongs to one of the servants of the Lord?' It had come then to this, that a Roman Emperor, struggling against his own inclinations to protect an unpopular class of his subjects from mob-violence and priestly intolerance, could be told, in a crowded church in one of the chief cities of his empire, that he was imitating the crimes of David in the darkest passage of his life, his adultery with Bathsheba, his unutterably mean as well as wicked murder of Uriah the Hittite.

The preacher then turned round and looked Theodosius full in the face. 'Therefore, oh Emperor, that I may now not speak only about thee but address my words unto thee, do thou also as the woman in Simon's house did unto Christ; cherish the Church, wash her feet, anoint them with precious ointment, that the whole house may be filled with the odour of it, that angels may exult in thy relaxation of the punishment

<sup>1</sup> Valens? or Julian?

of her members, that apostles may rejoice and prophets may be made glad.' BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

When Ambrose descended from the pulpit Theodosius met him and said, 'You have been preaching about Us.' Ambrose replied, 'I chose a subject which pertained to your welfare.' Theodosius: 'I was certainly too hard in my decision as to the Bishop's rebuilding of the synagogue; but that is now put straight. The monks commit many crimes<sup>1</sup>.' Timasius, general-in-chief of the forces<sup>2</sup>, echoed his master's words, and began to inveigh vehemently against the monks; but Ambrose brusquely interrupted him. 'I speak, as in duty bound, to the Emperor, who has the fear of God in his heart. I shall take some day a different course with thee, whose lips utter such hard things.' There then followed some undignified bargaining between the Emperor and the Bishop as to the issue of the edict of revocation. Ambrose twice said, 'I trust to your honour' [that it will be issued]. Theodosius at length replied, 'Trust to my honour;' and then Ambrose went to the altar and offered, as he says with an unusual feeling of the Divine acceptance, the Sacrifice which he would have persistently refused to offer for Theodosius had he not first received this pledge. Already the Christian hierarchy were beginning to feel and to use the tremendous power which the sacrificial theory of the Supper of the Lord placed in their hands. But Ambrose's easy victory was partly due to the peculiar temperament of Theodosius. That

<sup>1</sup> Apparently, therefore, it was only the monkish destruction of the Valentinian chapel that was now in question: Theodosius having retreated from the position which he had taken up regarding the synagogue.

<sup>2</sup> *Magister equitum et peditum.*

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

388.

Emperor, so prone to sudden and violent paroxysms of rage, was easily moved to pity and forgiveness when wrath had had its way, and it was just in such a moment of recoil that the Bishop's sermon met him and drew from him the confession—unjust to himself as our age deems it—that 'he had been too hard in insisting on the rebuilding of the synagogue.'

The Altar  
of Victory  
again.

It was perhaps in the following year (389<sup>1</sup>) that an embassy was sent by the Senate, in the forlorn hope of inducing Theodosius to consent to the restoration of the Altar of Victory. The chief orator was again Symmachus, who had fallen into disgrace on account of a panegyric which he had pronounced on the usurper Maximus, but having taken refuge at the altar of a Christian Church<sup>2</sup> had addressed an oration of praise and apology to the triumphant Emperor and had obtained forgiveness. Strangely enough the majesty of the Roman Senate seems to have made even the zealous Theodosius waver. There were some days during which the messengers had hopes of receiving an affirmative answer to their request; but the sternly averted face of Ambrose, who, during these days of doubt, refused to show himself in the presence-chamber of the Emperor, proved in the end mightier than the silver speech of Symmachus. Theodosius drove the heathen orator from his presence with the strange command that he should forthwith mount an uncovered chariot and put one hundred miles between himself and the Imperial Court<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Seeck (de Vita Symmachi lviii.) puts this embassy in the year of Symmachus' consulship (391).

<sup>2</sup> Belonging to the dissenting sect of the Novatians.

<sup>3</sup> 'Quem statim a suis aspectibus pulsum in centesimo lapide *raedae*

In the summer of 389 occurred one of those rare events, the visit of a Roman Emperor to the City, which nominally gave him the right to rule over the fairest portion of the habitable globe. On the 13th of June Theodosius entered in solemn pomp the Eternal City. By his side sat his young colleague Valentinian, on his lap his little son Honorius, a child of five years old<sup>1</sup>. The people received him with shouts of welcome, which he repaid with a liberal largesse<sup>2</sup>. With that stately affability, which he knew so well how to display without imperilling his dignity, he exchanged good-humoured banter with the crowd, and after the procession was over, entered, with friendly condescension, the houses of many of the nobles<sup>3</sup> and even some of the private citizens.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.  
389.  
Visit of  
Theodosius  
to Rome.

It was probably a few days after his entry into the City that Theodosius visited the Senate House and

Panegyric  
of Pacatus.

*non stratae impositum eâ die manere praecepit* (Prosper de Promiss. Dei iii. 38. 2 : quoted by Seeck).

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Guldenpenning (p. 174) suggests that the reason for Theodosius thus solemnly exhibiting Honorius to the Roman people was that, in the eventual partition of the Empire, he destined Italy and Africa for this his younger son, the East for Arcadius, the Gauls (Gratian's portion of the Empire) for Valentinian. The conjecture seems plausible, but it must be remembered that it is but a conjecture, supported by no hint from a contemporary authority.

<sup>2</sup> *'Et congiarium dedit populo Romano'* (Fasti Idatiani). The congiarium (from congius, a measure holding about six pints) was originally a distribution of wine or oil, but was probably now generally commuted into a money payment.

<sup>3</sup> *'Cum se melioribus addens*

*Exemplis, civem gereret, terrore remoto  
Alternos cum plebe jocos, dilectaque passus  
Jurgia, patriciasque domos, privataque passim  
Visere deposito dignatus limina fastu.'*

Claudian, De vi. Cons. Honor. 58-62.

BOOK I. there heard the Gaulish orator, Latinus Pacatus Dre-  
 CH. 10. panius, recite, with real or feigned timidity, that florid  
 389. panegyric on the Emperor and bitter invective on the  
 fallen usurper, to which we have been already indebted  
 for several facts in the history of both. In his perora-  
 tion Pacatus imagines himself on his return to his  
 native Gaul the centre of an admiring and envying  
 crowd, because it will be in his power to say 'I have  
 seen Rome; I have seen Theodosius; I have seen the  
 father of Honorius, the avenger of Gratian, the restorer  
 of Valentinian.' 'Distant cities will flock to me and  
 take down from my lips the story of the triumph.  
 Poets will derive from me the argument of their epics;  
 on the faith of my words history will recount the past.'  
 This last prediction has been curiously verified. His-  
 tory has used the oration of Pacatus as one of the  
 foundations of her edifice, but she has done so from  
 sheer necessity, and not from any confidence that she  
 can put in an inflated and passionate panegyric.

Social con-  
 dition of  
 Rome at  
 this time.

We are fortunate in possessing a contemporary pic-  
 ture by a master-hand, which enables us in some degree  
 to figure to ourselves the social life of the Roman  
 nobles and citizens who welcomed the Imperial partners  
 on their entrance into the City. Ammianus Marcel-  
 linus, writing possibly in this very year 389, twice<sup>1</sup>  
 describes in some detail the manners of the Roman  
 aristocracy and populace. True, his pen is dipped in  
 gall, and almost all the characters that he portrays in  
 these sketches are either odious or contemptible, but this  
 is the well-known license of the satirist, and especially  
 of that most bitter of satirists, a foreigner visiting a  
 great city and finding himself—as we suspect was the

<sup>1</sup> xiv. 6: xxviii. 4.



case with Ammianus—treated with somewhat less respect than he deems himself entitled to by his rank or his achievements.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.  
389.

The Roman aristocracy, we are told, made a great parade of their hospitality. Even sending commissioners down to Ostia to meet the arriving vessels and press the strangers on board to visit the palaces of their lords<sup>1</sup>; but the hospitality was tendered with a selfish motive and the interest in the stranger's welfare was short-lived. The great object of each Roman noble was to make his list of clients as long as possible, and for this purpose were uttered these words of eager welcome which at first made the visitor feel that Rome was the most delightful place in all the world, and that he had wasted his opportunities by not visiting it ten years before. But the stranger, once secured, ceased to be an object of interest; next day the gracious host had nearly forgotten all about him; whether he visited his patron daily or remained absent for years seemed to be a matter of perfect indifference.

Fitful hospitality of the nobles.

Through the streets walked these great nobles, ruffling it in brilliant tunics adorned with figures of animals, and over these a multitude of thin gauzy mantles to which they were for ever calling attention by waving their left hands backwards and forwards and by all sorts of affected gestures. Sometimes you met one of these aristocrats driving through the streets with his long train of slaves, looking like a little army scientifically marshalled by their wand-bearing stewards. On either side of the lofty chariot marched the spinners and weavers of the lordly wardrobe, then the sooty

Roman dandies.

<sup>1</sup> This curious custom is mentioned by Lydus (*De Magistratibus* i. 20).

BOOK I. ministers of the kitchen, then the promiscuous crowd of  
 CH. 10. slaves mingled with the rabble of poor neighbours, and  
 389. last of all, with pale, repulsive countenances, the eunuchs, beginning with the old men and ending with the boys.

When such a nobleman met one of his equals in the street, like a butting bull he thrust forward his head to be kissed; when he met one of his parasites, he offered in a similar way his hand or his knee, with a gesture which seemed to say that the honour thus conferred was alone enough to make life happy. When he entered the baths (for instance, those glorious halls whose ruins we still admire, which bear the name of Caracalla): ‘Where are my people?’ shouted the self-important master in a voice that was meant to strike terror into all who heard it. Fifty busy servants thronged around him intent on their ministrations. When the bath was over he was dried with towels of the finest linen; bright robes sufficient to clothe a dozen men were respectfully submitted to his gaze; he made the great decision and then received from a slave the rings which he had taken off that they might not be injured by the water, and stuck them on his fingers till these looked like graduated measuring-sticks.

The banquet.

At length the stranger would receive the invitation to supper, so eagerly sighed for by the parasite who assiduously courted the favour of the *nomenclator*<sup>1</sup> in order to obtain it, so little relished by a man of independent spirit, who nevertheless could hardly refuse it without mortally offending his patron. He must gaze with upturned eyes at the lofty-pillared entrance, he

<sup>1</sup> The remembrancer of guests: an animated Debrett or Court Directory.

must admire the mosaic pictures on the walls, he must affect to consider the noble entertainer as raised almost above our mortal state. Then followed the repast, the long and wearisome repast, in which there was no conversation about books or thought or any worthy topic of discourse, for these Roman nobles were so ignorant that they scarcely knew the names of their own ancestors. The talk was chiefly about eating and drinking; and often the scales would be sent for and the weight of the viands tested. The turbot, the capons, the very dormice which figured in the *menu* of a Roman voluptuary would be weighed and the weights solemnly recorded by a band of obsequious clerks, who stood round with their tablets and their pencils. There would be so much writing and ciphering about these childish experiments that the banquet only required a pedagogue to make it resemble a school.

Books (as has been said) were held in little esteem by the Roman nobility: neither philosophy nor history being cultivated by them; but from this general neglect the satires of Juvenal and the lives of the Emperors by Marius Maximus were excepted, probably because both books ministered to the love of scandal engendered by their lazy lives.

Music, dancing and comedy were the only arts that were held in much esteem. The houses which had once been devoted to serious and noble studies were now filled with burlesque performers or echoed to the strains of voluptuous music. Where the philosopher had sat now stood the barytone singer; for the orator you met the comedian. The libraries, closed from year's end to year's end, seemed like gloomy graves, except when sometimes the manufacture of hydraulic organs, or lyres

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

as large as chariots, resounded through their gloomy recesses. Roman matrons, or damsels old enough to have been matrons had they married, with daintily curled locks, were to be seen in all the places of public resort, perpetually sweeping the pavement with their whirling garments while they imitated to utter weariness the last dance which they had seen performed on the stage of the theatre.

All sense of moral proportion seemed to have vanished from the minds of this class of people. If a slave was somewhat slow in bringing the hot water, the order would go forth that he should be beaten with three hundred stripes: but if he had deliberately killed a man, to any demand for his punishment the master would reply, 'Poor fellow! he must have been out of his mind. I will tell him if he does it again he shall certainly be punished.' If these aristocrats undertook a journey to their estates in the country, they seemed to themselves to be rivalling the Indian expedition of Alexander; if they sailed in hot weather on the Avernian lake, and if a mosquito found its way through the silken curtains of the gilded barge, or a sunbeam pierced through an unnoticed hole, they would begin to beat their breasts and bewail their hard fate that they had not been born in Cimmerian cold and darkness.

Gamblers.

The only men among the Roman nobility who were capable of forming strong friendships were the gamblers, and these, from the remembrance of common dangers undergone, perhaps of common campaigns against the young men of fortune who were their victims, seemed to be bound together by indissoluble bonds.

Superstition.

Superstition and infidelity went, as they so often go, hand in hand. You might meet with men who denied

that there was any Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and yet who would neither go out into the street nor sit down to dinner—hardly even wash their hands—till they had consulted an almanack to ascertain the precise position of the planet Mercury, or to see whether the moon had entered the constellation Cancer.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

Lastly, in his sketch of the lives and manners of the Roman aristocracy, Ammianus insists on the degrading eagerness of their legacy-hunting, a practice on which Horace, and Juvenal before him, had poured out the vials of their scorn, but which in a rich, corrupt, and idle community was sure to engross the energies of many of its members. Not only the unmarried and the childless were assailed by the assiduity of the legacy-hunter. Sometimes even the father of a family would be induced by a fawning parasite, who had accommodated himself to his weaknesses, to make liberal provision for him in his will ; and in these cases the making of the will was often followed by a death of surprising suddenness. Husbands and wives, too, displayed the same ignoble eagerness for wealth to which death gave the key. The wife wearied the husband to make her his sole legatee. Then the husband persisted that his wife should return the compliment. Soothsayers would be privately consulted as to the time when the desired event would happen which would prevent all chance of the will being revoked : and sometimes, if soothsayers were not sufficient, some other help might be used to hasten the day, in which case the sorrowing survivor honoured the departed wife or husband with a funeral of surpassing splendour. In short, the judgment of Ammianus concerning most of the Roman nobles whom he had met, might be summed up in the words of

Legacy-hunting.



BOOK I. Cicero, 'In human affairs, their only test of goodness is  
CH. 10. profit : and men love their friends as a sheep-master loves his sheep, calculating all the while which will bring him in the heaviest gains.'

The  
Roman  
common-  
alty.

This gloomy and of course over-charged picture of the Roman aristocracy is followed by a few contemptuous words as to their humbler fellow-citizens, the men who had not got a pair of whole shoes to wear, but who had to give themselves grand and fine-sounding names. These were they whose days were passed in gambling and drinking, and worse debauchery, and their nights on the floor of the wine-shop or under the curtains of the theatre. How they threw the dice with a kind of pug-nacious eagerness and snorted defiance when the luck seemed going against them : how they crowded into the Circus Maximus, spending the livelong day, in blazing heat or pouring rain, scrutinising the points of the horses and the equipments of the charioteers : how on the day of a great race, long before dawn, they would throng the approaches to the hippodrome, swearing by the gods of the stable<sup>1</sup> that it would be all over with the State if the horse which they fancied did not first reach the goal : how they hissed the dramatic performers who had not bought their favour with coppers : the foul words which they used, and the senseless slang<sup>2</sup> which was for ever on their lips : all these incidents of

<sup>1</sup> 'Per Janos et Eponam clamitant' : an interesting passage, because on the line of the Roman Wall in England, as well as on the German Pfahlgraben, we have altars and images in honour of Epona, the goddess of stables.

<sup>2</sup> A favourite piece of slang, which Ammianus says no one could explain, was shouted apparently to a favoured performer, 'per te ille discat.' 'Ille' was, I suppose, the unpopular competitor.

plebeian life at Rome are sketched, with angry contempt, by the proud Syrian nobleman who came to the City on the Tiber, half-hoping that he might still find in her some trace of the Rome of the Catos and the Fabricii, but who found her dead to the memory of all her past nobleness, sunk in frivolous and degrading vices.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

We must not forget, however, that there was another side to the life of the Roman aristocracy, of which Ammianus remained in perhaps voluntary ignorance. While the nobles whom he visited were compassing sea and land to obtain some fresh gratification for their sensual appetites, there were Roman matrons, heirs of some of the greatest names of the Republic, who, in their palaces on the lonely Aventine, were living a life wholly apart from that of the wicked and frivolous City, a life in which 'high thinking' and the plainest of 'plain living' went hand in hand. The visit of Athanasius to Rome half a century before the date which we have now reached, and the earnest pleadings of the Egyptian monks, his companions, on behalf of a monastic life, had borne fruit in these austere noble souls. There, on the Aventine was Marcella, the descendant of the great Marcellus, Fabiola the child of the Fabii, Furia who traced up her lineage to the great Camillus. With these had once been joined Paula, descended on her mother's side from Paulus Aemilius, on her father's from Agamemnon, king of men: but Paula and her favourite daughter were now inhabitants of a narrow cell by the cradle of Christ at Bethlehem, and the great teacher of the Church, St. Jerome, who had preached the monastic life with such success in the palaces of Rome, was the sharer of their exile and their seclusion. All these devout and honourable women

The  
Christian  
aristocracy.

340.

BOOK I. lived a life of the strictest self-denial, devoting them-  
 CH. 10. selves to study and the service of the poor, spending  
 — their days in the reading of the Scriptures in Greek and  
 Hebrew, and making the nights melodious with their  
 pious psalmody.

Chariot-  
 races.

But it is not with monastic Aventine that we must now concern ourselves. We turn from those high and pure, if somewhat narrow, souls, to the coarse and brutal mob who are filling the Circus Maximus below with their senseless clamour. Already the Chariot-race was becoming the central event in the lives of a multitude of Roman citizens. Already we may conjecture the two colours blue and green, which denoted the most popular training-stables, had attracted to themselves that wild fervour of party feeling which 140 years later was to lay Constantinople in ashes. 'The green charioteer flashes by, a great part of the inhabitants are in despair. The blue gets a lead: yet more are in misery. They cheer frantically when they have gained nothing: they are cut to the heart when they have sustained no loss: they plunge with as much eagerness into these empty contests as if the welfare of the whole country were at stake<sup>1</sup>. So keen was the competition and of such immense importance to a popular chariot-driver did his success appear, that the magicians and the poisoners were freely resorted to, that by their unhal-  
 lowed arts a dangerous rival might be rendered incapable of victory. This was a matter of such common occurrence that magic or poison was as naturally associated

Bewitched  
 charioteers.

<sup>1</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variae* iii. 51. This letter was written in the early part of the sixth century, but the allusions of Ammianus show that the state of public feeling a hundred and fifty years earlier is correctly described by it.

with the name of a favourite *auriga* as foul play of other kinds in our days with the under-strappers of a racing-stable. Before Theodosius left Rome he issued a law<sup>1</sup> denouncing capital punishment on any charioteer who should take private vengeance on even an avowed magician from whose arts he had suffered. 'If he has bewitched you,' says the Imperial legislator, 'he is the enemy of the general safety, and should be brought forth in public, and examined under the eyes of the judges. By dealing the deadly blow to him in secret, you incur a twofold suspicion; first, that you yourself have had recourse to his services for a similar purpose, and, secondly, that you are punishing a private enemy under pretence of zeal for the public good<sup>2</sup>.'

After leaving Rome Theodosius visited several cities in Northern Italy, and returned to Milan before the end of November. He spent the whole of the year 390, and the first half of 391, in that city in the near neighbourhood of the great Bishop, whose presence awed and yet fascinated him. Here, probably in the month of April, 390, he heard the tidings of an event which in its consequences brought the names of Theodosius and Ambrose into ever memorable relation with each other. This event (closely connected with that very passion for the chariot-race which we have just been considering) was the sedition of Thessalonica.

The cause of this sedition is so connected with the unnatural vices of the Graeco-Roman population of that period that it can be but vaguely hinted at by a modern historian. It is sufficient to say that Botheric, master of

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

Theodosius  
returns to  
Milan.  
389.

Outbreak  
at Thes-  
salonica.

<sup>1</sup> Cod. Theod. ix. 16, 11. The date of the law is 16 Aug. 389.

<sup>2</sup> I owe the reference to this law (very fully explained and illustrated by Gothofred in loc.) to Dr. Guldenpenning, p. 179.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

390.

Punished  
by an  
indis-  
criminate  
massacre.

the soldiery in Illyricum, and evidently a man of Teutonic extraction, had with righteous indignation committed to prison a certain charioteer who was guilty of an abominable crime<sup>1</sup>. In the second act of the drama we find the populace mad with the frenzy of the arena, perhaps also smarting under the feeling of their inferiority to the barbarians quartered upon them, fiercely shouting for the liberation of their favourite. When cries and menaces did not avail to shake the Goth's stern purpose of punishment, they rose in armed rebellion, slew Botheric and some of the other Imperial officers, and dragged their bodies in triumph through the city. The rage of Theodosius, when he heard of this insult to his authority, was indescribable, and hurried him into a revenge the stupidity of which was equal to its wickedness. Without any attempt at a judicial enquiry to ascertain who were the authors of the rebellion, he sent his soldiers (many of them probably the countrymen of the murdered Botheric) to the city, with orders to bring back a certain number of heads<sup>2</sup>. One historian<sup>3</sup> places the number at 7000; another<sup>4</sup>, probably exaggerating, fixes it at 15,000. But whatever may have been the number ordered, the peculiar atrocity of the mandate, its perfect indifference to the guilt or innocence of the victims, is admitted by

<sup>1</sup> There had been also for some time a smouldering quarrel between the citizens and the soldiery (who were probably Gothic *foederati*) about billeting. This is mentioned by Cedrenus and Theophanes. The affair of the imprisoned charioteer perhaps brought the quarrel to a crisis.

<sup>2</sup> According to one account (that given by Rufinus, ii. 18) the citizens were, with grim irony, invited to assemble in the Circus to witness the games, and there the soldiers were let loose upon them.

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret, v. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Theophanes, p. 62. (Paris ed. 1655.)



all. There is something Oriental rather than Roman in this absolute contempt for even the semblance of justice, and it may be doubted if any, even among the most brutal of the wearers of the purple, is stained with a more utterly unkingly crime than this. Moreover, as Gibbon has well observed, Thessalonica had been one of the favourite abodes of the Emperor, and the enormity of his guilt seems intensified by the fact that he must have known by heart the look of the place which his soldiers were to fill with ghastly corpses, and that the citizens who, innocent of any crime, were to fall beneath the sword of his satellites, were men with many of whose faces he must have been familiar, men with whom perchance he had himself exchanged a friendly *Salve* on his way to the bath or the circus. Thessalonica was the scene of his dangerous illness, of his slow convalescence, of the baptism which was meant to mark his rising up to a purer and holier life. Strange! that no softening remembrances came across his mind to prevent his indiscriminate slaughter of her sons. Yet scenes of which the following is a type must have been common during the massacre. A certain merchant (possibly one of these acquaintances of the Imperial murderer) had the misery of finding that his two sons were selected as victims. He entreated to be allowed to substitute himself for one of them: his tears, his gold, were almost effectual in obtaining this melancholy favour from the soldiery. But then the question arose, 'Which was to be the rescued one?' He looked from one face to another, both so dear, in an agony of indecision; and while he hesitated the brutal soldiers shouted out 'There is no time to lose, the number must be completed,' and slew both the young men before his eyes. While another

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

390.

Sozomen,  
vii. 25.

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

390.

citizen was being led to the shambles he was met by a devoted slave who with pathetic fidelity offered his own life to the executioners as a ransom for his master's, and apparently the offer was accepted.

Such was the crime of the massacre at Thessalonica, a crime which may have been atoned for in the sight of Heaven by the sincerity of the Emperor's after penitence, but which in the judgment of history must stamp with indelible reprobation, not his character only but the constitution of the State under which such deeds were possible.

Indigna-  
tion of  
Ambrose.

Ambrose, when he heard of the massacre, was stirred with honest anger at the brutal crime, a crime against which the law-revering instincts of the old Roman official protested as loudly as the humane instincts of the Christian Bishop. Moreover there was an element of offended dignity added to his righteous wrath. Theodosius throughout his residence at Milan had taken him less into his counsels than so orthodox an Emperor might have been expected to do; but in this affair he had promised Ambrose that he would deal leniently with the guilty city. Afterwards, however, other counsellors, obtaining access to his person, had rekindled the half-extinguished fire of his resentment and had effaced the remembrance of the Bishop's soothing words and his own Imperial promise. Ambrose now studiously avoided the presence of his sovereign, and in a letter full of manly dignity told him that he was doing this intentionally, though he pleaded to the world the excuse of sickness, because his conscience would not permit him to condone the unrepented crime of the Emperor. 'I do not dare to offer the Sacrifice while you are standing by. If the blood of

even one man disqualifies the murderer from the Communion, how much more that of thousands! Moreover in a dream of the night, when I was on the point of starting for Milan, I saw you entering the Church, and an intimation from God Himself forbade me to offer the Sacrifice before you.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.

390.

What reply Theodosius may have made to this letter we know not, but he apparently presented himself soon after in the church of Milan, intending there to take his usual part in the worship of the congregation. He was met, however, on the threshold by the Bishop who, in temperate but weighty words, forbade him to enter. 'The magnitude of the Empire, and the intoxicating influence of absolute power, might have prevented him from discerning as yet the enormity of his crime: but robed as he was in the Imperial purple, he was still but a man whose body would crumble into dust, whose spirit would return to God Who gave it. What account would he then be able to give of this dreadful massacre of his subjects? His subjects truly, but also his fellow-servants, men whose souls were as precious in God's sight as his own. How could one whose hands were still soiled with that innocent blood, acceptably join in the worship of Almighty God. Let him depart, and in seclusion from the rest of the faithful, let him practise penitence and prayer till the time should come when he might fitly be absolved from his great transgression.'

Theodosius  
repulsed  
from the  
Church;

Theodoret,  
v. 18.

and placed  
under an  
interdict.

Theodosius, 'who was well instructed in Scripture, and who well knew the respective limits of the ecclesiastical and temporal power,' received this rebuke with patience, obeyed the interdict, and returned sadly to the Imperial palace. More than eight months after, he made another attempt to obtain reconciliation with

BOOK I.  
Ch. 10.

390.  
Rufinus  
mediates  
without  
success.

the Church ; but with a strange want of tact, or of remembrance, he permitted the office of mediator to be assumed by Rufinus. Rufinus, a native of an obscure town in Gascony, had made his way to the court of Byzantium, and there, with nothing to recommend him either as statesman or as general, had climbed up, by dint of flattery, intrigue, and calumny of his competitors, into the place of Praetorian Prefect, the highest position under the Emperor. His rapacity had made him the wealthiest and the most hated of all the ministers of Theodosius, and, scenting no doubt some plunder in the crime, he had (at least according to the belief of the people) been the chief instigator of the Thessalonian massacre. Such was the man whose officious servility proposed to the depressed Emperor an attempt to procure a removal of the interdict, and actually prompted him to offer his own good offices in the negotiation. Rufinus found Theodosius in tears and asked the cause. ‘You may be mirthful, oh Rufinus!’ said the sighing Emperor, ‘but I must be sad. It is now Christmas, the time of the Church’s gladness ; but though beggars and slaves may enter the house of the Lord, its doors are closed to me.’ Reluctantly and without hope Theodosius permitted Rufinus to intercede for him with Ambrose. But the Bishop, as soon as he saw the Praetorian Prefect, addressed him with burning words : ‘You are as shameless as a dog, oh Rufinus ! It was you who advised this cruel massacre, yet you come to me without a word of penitence or remorse for the outrage you have committed on the images of the Most High.’ Rufinus cringed, but hinted that the Emperor would insist on coming to the Church. Ambrose replied, ‘He shall slay me first.

If he will change his emperorship into tyrantship, I cannot hinder him, but with my consent he comes not within these walls.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 10.  
390.

Hearing of the ill-success of his messenger, the Emperor resolved to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs, and went not to the Church, but to the house of Ambrose, exclaiming, 'I will go and receive the censure which I deserve.' Ambrose again remonstrated with him for his tyranny: 'I repent of it,' said Theodosius. 'Repentance should be openly manifested, and should be accompanied by some precaution against the repetition of the offence.' 'What precaution can I take? Show me the remedy and I will adopt it.' 'Since passion was the cause of thy fall, oh Emperor, prepare a law which shall henceforth interpose an interval of thirty days between the signing of any capital sentence or decree of proscription and its execution. In these thirty days, if passion, not justice, dictated the decree, there will be a chance for reason to be heard, and for the decree to be modified or revoked.'

Theodosius  
repents,

Theodosius gladly accepted this wise and statesman-like suggestion, and having signed the new law was released from the interdict and permitted to enter the Church. Prostrate on the floor he repeated the words of the 119th Psalm, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to Thy word,' and by sighs and tears, by smiting upon his forehead, and tearing his hair, he manifested to the assembled multitude the agony of his remorse.

and is  
absolved.  
25 Dec.  
390.

After the service was ended, the weeping penitent laid his gift upon the table, and then remained within the altar-railings waiting to receive the bread and wine. Ambrose sent him a message by a deacon com-



BOOK I.

CH. 10.

390.

manding him to withdraw from that sacred enclosure which was reserved for priests only: 'The Emperor must worship with the rest of the laity outside the rails. The purple robe makes Emperors only, not priests.' Theodosius humbly obeyed the mandate, merely observing that he had not intentionally erred, but had followed the usage of Constantinople, which gave that place to the Emperor. (Already then, even before the separation of the two Empires, the Italian priest held his head higher in the presence of Caesar than the Byzantine.) On his return to Constantinople Theodosius refused to occupy his old place of honour by the altar, saying to the wondering Bishop, 'With difficulty have I learned the difference between an Emperor and a priest. It is hard for a ruler to meet with one willing to tell him the truth. Ambrose is the only man whom I consider worthy of the name of Bishop.'

Thus did Theodosius, the prototype in so many other respects of the great 'Roman' Emperors of a later age, anticipate in his own person that humiliation of the Caesar before the successor of Peter, which was so often enacted in the Middle Ages, and which was most vividly exemplified in the courtyard of Canossa. But Theodosius, with all his faults, was a nobler antagonist than the Emperor Henry IV, and St. Ambrose, fighting for the inalienable rights of humanity, was the champion of a nobler cause than those ecclesiastical claims which kindled the zeal of Hildebrand.

## CHAPTER XI.

### EUGENIUS AND ARBOGAST.

#### Authorities.

#### *Sources :—*

The ecclesiastical historians furnish us with our best materials for this part of the history. In addition to the authors of this class noticed on p. 280, especial mention must be made of RUFINUS, to whom we owe the fullest details of the destruction of the Serapeum. This author, the compatriot, friend, and afterwards bitter adversary of Jerome, was born in the neighbourhood of Aquileia (probably at Concordia) about 345, spent twenty years as a monk on the Mount of Olives, returned to Aquileia, intending to pass the last years of his life there, but was driven forth by the Gothic invasion, and died at Messina in 410. His continuation of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius embraces the period from 324 to the death of Theodosius (395). Socrates, who to some extent built upon his foundation, complains of his chronological errors ; he is extravagantly fond of relating marvels and miracles, and altogether his standpoint is that of a bigoted and credulous monk. Still he sometimes (as in the case above-mentioned, of the destruction of the Serapeum) gives us details which we find nowhere else.

We begin in this chapter to draw from a source which flows for us very copiously for the next nine years, the poet CLAUDIAN. Claudius Claudianus, a native of Alexandria, the years of whose birth and death are both unknown to us, appears to have come to Rome about the year 395, and to have soon established himself as a kind of poet-laureate of the young Emperor Honorius and his guardian Stilicho. His literary activity seems to have been confined to the period 395-404. By the influence of Serena, wife of Stilicho, he obtained the hand of an African

BOOK I.  
CH. II.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

heiress, to whose estate he may possibly have retired in the early years of the century. If we may trust an inscription said to have been seen by Pomponius Laetus on the Quirinal in 1493 (recorded by Gruter, p. 391), Claudian received the offices of a *Tribunus et Notarius*, which gave him the rank of *Clarissimus*, and had a statue raised to him in the Forum of Trajan, 'though his poems would alone have sufficed to make his memory eternal.'

Poetry of  
Claudian.

The literary and religious position of Claudian is interesting and peculiar. A Greek-Egyptian by birth, to whom Latin was probably a foreign tongue, he nevertheless succeeded in imitating, not altogether unsuccessfully, the great bards of Latium. Undisturbed by the memories of the Isis, Osiris, and Serapis of his fatherland, and equally disdainful of the saints and angels, the virgins and martyrs of the now dominant Christian faith, he calmly imports the stage machinery of Olympus from the pages of Homer and Virgil, and applies it without a moment's hesitation to the events of his own day, to the defeat of Maximus and the elevation of Rufinus. He attaches himself always to some powerful patron, whose exploits are all but superhuman and whose character is stainless, while the patron's enemies are painted in tints of unredeemed blackness. This utter want of atmosphere in his colouring wearies the eye, and the perpetual rhetoric of his verse palls upon the ear; but with all his faults it is to him that we must look to make the dry bones of epitomists and church historians live again before us, and though his thought may often be poor, his expression is not always unworthy of his great master, Virgil. In this power over words he may perhaps be fitly compared to our own Byron, whose apostrophe to Rome

'O Rome, my country, city of my soul!'

seems to remind one of the untranslatable grandeur of Claudian's epithet,

'Urbs aequaeva polo.'

A poet inferior in merit to Claudian, yet not devoid of poetic faculty, is Aurelius PRUDENTIUS Clemens, a Spaniard, born in 348, and as zealous on behalf of Christianity as Claudian is emphatic in his Paganism. He was trained as a rhetorician. 'Twice' (as he says) 'held the reins of power in noble cities,' and was pro-

moted to some high position at Court. At the age of fifty-seven he resolved to retire from the service of the world, and devote himself to God's service as a Christian poet. The year of his death is unknown. The poems with which we are chiefly concerned—the two books *Contra Symmachum*—were composed, or, at any rate, published, ten years after the time that we have now reached, but they relate to the controversy about the Altar of Victory, the recrudescence of heathenism under Eugenius, and its final defeat by Theodosius. The literary talent of Prudentius seems to me to have been somewhat unfairly under-estimated. Gibbon (chap. xxviii. n. 17) speaks of the 'poetry, if it may deserve that name, of Prudentius,' and it is a common remark that in his reply to Symmachus he only versifies the arguments of Ambrose. But there are, to my thinking, many noble lines and some genuine poetry in the work in question; and though Prudentius necessarily travels over a good deal of the same ground as the Bishop of Milan, he rejects his weaker arguments and handles his stronger ones with a force and freedom which make his defence of the Christian faith far more satisfactory than his predecessor's. I can find nothing in Ambrose's polemic nearly so good as Prudentius' argument that the union of all the nations under the sceptre of Rome was ordained by God in order to prepare the way for the kingdom of Christ (II. 601-640). His allusions to Symmachus 'the glory of Roman eloquence,'

'Quo nunc nemo disertior  
Exultat, fremit, intonat,  
Ventisque eloquii tumet,'

are in the best style of courteous debate, and the appeal put into the mouth of Theodosius to spare the statues of the gods for their beauty's sake (I. 500-505) shows that we are here dealing with no vulgar and narrow-minded iconoclast.

(I can strongly recommend to English readers Translations from Prudentius, with an introduction and notes by Rev. F. St. John Thackeray, London, 1890.)

*Guides:—*

In this, as in a previous chapter, I am much indebted to Professor Lanciani's *Ancient Rome* in the light of recent discoveries (Boston, 1889).

BOOK I. The whole religious history of the reign of Theodosius is  
 CH. 11. well presented in the Duc de Broglie's great work, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au iv<sup>e</sup> Siècle*. He takes a far more favourable view of the character of Theodosius than I am able to do.

Theodosius returns to the East. In August 391 Theodosius left Italy and entered the eastern half of that which was all virtually *his* Empire. Valentinian II, trained by his counsels, reconciled by him to Ambrose and to orthodoxy, was now, apparently, strong enough to rule alone. The Eastern realm, over which the boy Arcadius had nominally presided, really administered by the Praetorian Prefect Tatian, an able, but not immaculate minister, might well seem now to require the largest share of the attention of the Earthly Providence.

He visits Thessalonica.

Barbarians or freebooters, enough to trouble the tranquillity of the province, though not enough to effect any serious political change, were roving up and down in Macedonia. Thither accordingly Theodosius first repaired: and to deliver Macedonia it was needful that he should take up his quarters in the same place which had welcomed his dawning royalty twelve years before, the city of the Axios, Thessalonica. Willingly would we learn with what emotions, whether of penitence or of still smouldering resentment, he trod those streets which had so lately been filled with slaughter by the ministers of his cruelty; but no letter or oration here lights up our darkness. Instead, we have only a wild romantic story from Zosimus (who is silent as to the years of the Emperor's residence in Italy), with reference to his exploits among the barbarian freebooters. These marauders, he tells us, hiding among the marshes by day and sallying forth at night for plunder, could not be exterminated by the processes

Skirmishes with the barbarians of the marshes.



of regular warfare, and the campaign against them seemed like fighting with ghosts. Theodosius, accordingly, disguising his rank, took five horsemen as his companions, each leading three or four reserve horses, and scoured the country with these. At length they came to a little lonely inn kept by an old woman, who received the unknown Emperor courteously and gave him food and shelter. In that mean abode he lay down to sleep, but as he did so he espied a mysterious and silent stranger in the sleeping room. The old woman, when questioned, denied all knowledge of the name and calling of the stranger, who was absent all day but came back each night tired and hungry. To all questions he preserved the same sullen silence: but at length Theodosius made known his rank, and ordered his soldiers to hack him to pieces with their swords. The man then confessed that he was a spy of the barbarians, who spent his days in informing them of the movements of the army, and pointing out to them when and where they might safely make their next foray. Having cut off the head of this spy, the Emperor galloped with his men to the main body of his army, which was encamped at no great distance, fell with them upon the marauders whose ambush he had thus learned, 'dragged forth some from their hiding-places in the marshes, killed others as they were in the water, and, in short, made that night a great slaughter of the barbarians.'

The confidence bred of this success brought upon the Imperial army a great disaster. Timasius, the Master of the Infantry under the Emperor, regaled his troops so lavishly from the spoils of the barbarians, that, while the camp was all abandoned to drunken slumber, some

Defeat of  
Timasius  
and victory  
of Pro-  
motus.

BOOK I. still unvanquished horde of freebooters came upon  
 CH. 11. them, and, wreaking dire slaughter on their sleeping  
 391. foes, brought for some critical moments the sacred  
 person of the Emperor himself into jeopardy. But  
 Promotus, the brave and wary Master of the Cavalry<sup>1</sup>,  
 hastening up to the scene rescued Theodosius from his  
 peril, and turning the tide of battle inflicted a crushing  
 defeat on the barbarians.

Theodosius  
 enters Con-  
 stantino-  
 ple.

After these labours and dangers Theodosius re-  
 turned to the splendid repose of the city which he  
 probably loved best of any in his Empire. It was on  
 the 10th of November, 391, that he, with his little son  
 Honorius, entered Constantinople, passing through the  
 Golden Gate, the Gate of Conquest, which he himself  
 had gilded in honour of his victory over Maximus,  
 and was slowly drawn by harnessed elephants through  
 acclaiming crowds, till he reached the palace of the  
 welcoming Arcadius<sup>2</sup>.

Ascend-  
 ancy of  
 Rufinus.

When Theodosius was once again established in his  
 Eastern capital, and when the pageants and the feast-  
 ings which commemorated his return<sup>3</sup> were ended he  
 took again into his hand the dropped strings of ad-  
 ministration: and now the influence of Rufinus, the

<sup>1</sup> The former victor of the Greuthungi: see p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> We get the date from Socrates, v. 18. The gilding of the Porta Aurea is attested by an inscription:—

‘Haec loca Theodosius decorat post fata tyranni;

Aurea saccla gerit qui portam construit auro.’

It is pointed out by Dr. Dethier (*Le Bosphore et Constantinople*, pp. 12 and 48) that this Porta Aurea cannot be the same which we now know by that name, and which is in the walls built by Theodosius II; but must have pierced the Wall of Constantine, and been not far from the present Soulu Monastir.

<sup>3</sup> To which Zosimus, as usual, gives ill-natured prominence (iv. 50).

new counsellor whom he had brought with him from the West, became quickly manifest. The two great Civil governors, Tatian, Consul for the year and Praetorian Prefect of the East, and his son Proclus, Prefect of the City, who had been practically regents during the absence of Theodosius; the two great military commanders, Promotus and Timasius, one of whom had lately saved the Emperor himself in the night attack of the barbarians; all found themselves treated with the insolence of a conscious favourite by the upstart Gascon. High words and stormy discussions were frequent in the Imperial Consistory. During one of these scenes the language used by Rufinus was so audacious, that Promotus, who was assailed by it, forgot what was due to the Sacred Presence-chamber and slapped his adversary on the face. Rufinus at once presented himself before the Emperor with his cheek yet red from the palm of Promotus, and Theodosius, coming forth in a rage, told the trembling Counsellors that if they would not lay aside their jealousy of Rufinus they should soon see him wearing the diadem<sup>1</sup>. By the favourite's influence Promotus was soon ordered off to the dreary Danubian frontier, and fell a victim to some barbarian assassins who waylaid him on the journey. His death was attributed, but probably without justice, to the machinations of Rufinus.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

391.

Disgrace  
and death  
of Pro-  
motus.

Tatian and his son still stood in the way of the upward-pushing favourite, who was already designated

Fall of  
Tatian and  
Proclus.

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ μὴ τὸν κατὰ 'Ρουφίνου φθόνον ἀπόθουντο ταχέως αὐτὸν ὄψονται βασιλεύοντα (Zos. iv. 51). Would not αὐτὸν give a better sense? 'If they did not lay aside their jealousy of Rufinus, they should soon see him (Theodosius) assert himself as Emperor!'

BOOK I. as Consul for the next year (392), but who also aspired  
 CH. 11. to the great place of Praetorian Prefect of the East.  
 391. The administration of the father and son had perhaps not been altogether spotless, but on the whole they appear to have been faithful servants of Theodosius<sup>1</sup>. However, the ambition of Rufinus required their removal, and Theodosius, in the blindness of his favouritism, nominated the Gascon member of a commission which was to try the very men for whose offices he hungered. Tatian was of course deprived of his dignity. Proclus, hearing of the commencement of the trial, fled the country. He was tempted back again by promises, oaths, assurances of friendly intentions, in which even Theodosius is accused of having participated. Once back in the power of his enemies he was thrown into prison, and, after appearing many times before his judges, was sentenced to death. Theodosius, relenting, sent a message of pardon, but Rufinus took good care that the bearer of it should be slower of foot than the messenger of vengeance, and Proclus was beheaded in the suburb of Sycae, where now the streets of many-nationed Galata border on the Golden Horn. As for the aged Tatian he was banished in disgrace to his native Lycia. And not only so, but by a strange act of tyranny, less cruel indeed but not more logical than the massacre of Thessalonica, all other natives of the province of Lycia were for Tatian's fault rendered

<sup>1</sup> We are obliged to speak in this hesitating way about the administration of Tatian and his son, because of the extraordinarily varying characters given of each of them by Libanius—characters which almost force Sievers to the conclusion that there were *two* pairs of relatives of this name holding high office in the East within a short space of time (Libanius, 159).

incapable of rising to the higher dignities of the State <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. II.

In the East as in the West the campaign of crowned and triumphant Christianity against the out-worn creeds of heathenism was being actively pursued. We should, perhaps, say more actively in the East than in the West, since in few Oriental cities was there that scornful hate of the new faith which still lingered in the palaces of the Roman aristocracy. It has been already mentioned<sup>2</sup> that Cynegius, one of the highest ministers of the State, had been despatched to Egypt (probably about the year 384) to close the temples dedicated to heathen worship, and it seems that his commission, though primarily applicable to Egypt, had reference also to other Eastern provinces. The order then given, however, was only to close, not to demolish the temples. It might be hoped that when the smoke of the incense no longer curled round the feet of the sacred statues, when the steps of the temple were no longer worn by the feet of eager worshippers, and a rusty chain closed the gates of the *pronaos*, the sanctuaries left in dingy desolation would cease to possess any fascination for the minds of their former visitants. In one case, however, at any rate, the heathen temple was still mighty enough to be dangerous, and was still the object of an enthusiasm which proved its ruin.

Campaign  
against  
heathen-  
ism.

The stately Serapeum of Alexandria, rising on that little eminence where now stands the lonely pillar of

The Sera-  
peum of  
Alexan-  
dria.

<sup>1</sup> This senseless and unjust law is only made known to us by the Edict of Arcadius (Cod. Theod. ix. 38. 9) repealing it. This law still speaks of Tatian as 'taeterrimus Judex.'

<sup>2</sup> p. 414.



BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

Diocletian<sup>1</sup>, overlooking from afar the busy harbour and the historic Pharos, was the proudest monument reared by the Greek Ptolemies in honour of that Egyptian worship to which they paid their politic homage. The temple stood on a great square platform, to which the worshippers ascended by one hundred steps. Many shrines, and chapels, and vestries, and cells for hierophants surrounded the main building, which rose in pillared magnificence in the centre, a mountain of marble, which we cannot help mentally comparing with the Temple at Jerusalem, and which a Roman historian<sup>2</sup> who beheld its glory thought unsurpassed save by the Capitol. In the innermost recess stood the statue of the god Serapis, that compound divinity formed of Osiris and Apis, whom the Ptolemies set forth for the adoration of their subjects. So gigantic was the statue that the right hand touched one wall and the left hand the other, of the great hall in which it stood. Plates of brass, of silver, and of gold lined the walls of that spacious hall, and there was one tiny window through which on a certain day the beams of the rising sun were poured, as the priests said, 'in salutation of Serapis.' But the statue itself, though overlaid with gold and silver and studded with sapphires, with topazes and with emeralds, bore the impress of the barbaric East in its form as well as in its gorgeous magnificence: for the head was not like the majestic Zeus of Olympia, but a monstrous medley of a lion's head in the centre with a ravening wolf on its left side and a fawning dog on

<sup>1</sup> Commonly called 'Pompey's Pillar.' According to some archaeologists, this pillar once formed part of the colonnade of the Serapeum.

<sup>2</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus.

its right. So had the strange symbolic animal-worship of Egypt prevailed over the instincts of beauty in the mind of the Greek artist who fashioned the image of Serapis.

BOOK I.  
Ch. 11.

Theophilus, the Bishop of Alexandria, a restless and ambitious man, had aroused the wrath of the still considerable heathen population of that city by his exposure of the mechanical contrivances whereby their priests had been wont to work miracles in one of their temples. The idolaters, who knew of the war which a devout Emperor was waging against their worship, felt that they were being driven to the last ditch in the defence of their ancestral faith. They assembled in the still strong and stately Serapeum, and making that their citadel, sallied forth at intervals into the streets and squares of the city, did battle with the excited Christians (among whom the fanatical monks from the desert were probably conspicuous), and then returned into their stronghold, often dragging with them a number of Christian captives, whom rumour accused them, probably without truth, of torturing in the recesses of the Serapeum. Two grammarians, Helladius and Ammonius, were captains in this religious war, but the General, as we may term him, was a man named Olympius, clad in a philosopher's cloak, who seems to have been an orator of considerable power. Now he was lashing his hearers to fury, telling them that 'they ought to die rather than neglect the god of their fathers.' Then, in calmer tone, he reasoned with them as to the theory of idolatry. 'Be not dismayed,' said he, 'if some of the statues of the gods are overthrown and destroyed by the Nazarenes. Of course the statues are made of corruptible things, and are subject to decay: but they

The  
heathen  
garrison  
of the  
temple.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

Feebleness  
of the  
authorities  
at Alex-  
andria.

typify a divine and indestructible power which escapes from the broken image, even as the soul of man flies from its shattered tenement and returns to the heavens whence it first descended<sup>1</sup>. While these commotions were occurring, and while the blood of Roman citizens was being actually shed on one side or the other, the Prefect and the Master of the Soldiery feebly represented the outraged majesty of the laws. They visited the temple, and mildly enquired of its disorderly garrison what was the cause of their insurrection, and why they were so daring as to shed the blood of their fellow-citizens. A confused and angry murmur was the only reply, and they retired to make a report of all these proceedings to Theodosius. It is probable, though the Church historians do not inform us of the fact, that the authority of these Imperial officers was set at nought by Theophilus and his monks as much as by Olympius and the idolaters. During the weeks or months that were required for messages to go and return between Alexandria and Milan (for these events probably occurred while Theodosius was still in Italy) a sullen truce perhaps prevailed between the Cathedral and the Serapeum. At length the Imperial rescript arrived, a wiser and more temperate document than might have been expected from the chastiser of Thessalonica. 'The Christians who have fallen in these disturbances are martyrs. Their blessed state exempts us from the necessity of seeking to avenge their blood: and accordingly free pardon is given to the idolaters who have been concerned in the late disturbances. But we condemn the vain superstition of the Gentiles, and we order

The order  
for the  
demolition  
of the  
Serapeum  
arrives  
from Theo-  
dosius.

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, vii. 15. I have slightly expanded the thought of Olympius as here reported.

the destruction of their temple.' A loud shout of applause burst from the Christians when they heard these words, and they proceeded straightway to the temple to put the edict in force. The defenders heard the shouts and were dismayed. Olympius, it was said, had heard on the previous night the voices of unseen spirits singing Alleluia in the very presence of the three-headed idol, and silently, and by stealth, had quitted the temple and embarked for Italy.

The Church Militant, with Theophilus at its head, entered the doomed sanctuary. The assailants pressed through the corridors, the chapels, the cells of the hierophants, they entered the great hall where stood the mighty beast-statue, which had been saluted for the last time by the rising sun. Even in that Christian multitude there were many who looked upon it with awe, remembering an ancient prophecy, that if anyone approached that statue an earthquake would follow in which the whole world would be swallowed up. Theophilus smiled with contempt at these old wives' fables, and, beckoning to a soldier, ordered him to strike the statue. Full of faith the soldier raised his axe, and brought it down with all his force on the idol's jaw. The people shrieked with fear, but their panic was turned into laughter when from the broken head a troop of frightened mice came running forth. The soldier struck again and again. Fire was applied to hasten the work of destruction. The legs and feet were chopped off and dragged through the streets, the head was exhibited in scorn to its late worshippers, and, last of all, the huge trunk of the idol was drawn to the great amphitheatre and there burned in the presence of a vast concourse of people.



BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

As the work of demolition went forward the secret mechanism of the temple, and all the priestly artifices of miraculous fraud were laid bare to the vulgar gaze. A Christian Basilica was built amongst the ruins of the overthrown sanctuary. It, too, has had its day, and now neither Christ nor Serapis is worshipped on the bare hill-slope where once stood the splendid Serapeum<sup>1</sup>.

From the destruction of temples we return to the fall of thrones. It was probably in the month of June, 392, in the midst of the palace revolution which gave to Rufinus the Praetorian mantle of Tatian, that disastrous tidings arrived at Constantinople, informing Theodosius that another of his young colleagues, the last male representative of the house of Valentinian, had been cut off in the dawn of his manhood.

Character  
of Valen-  
tinian II.

Valentinian II, like his brother Gratian, is one of those princes on whose characters it is difficult for history to pronounce judgment, because she sees but the half-opened bud and can only guess at the fashion of the flower. In the earlier part of his reign he of course represented merely the beliefs or misbeliefs, the usurpations or the grievances of his mother, the beautiful but impulsive Justina. Her influence was now removed: the arguments of Theodosius, founded chiefly on such mundane considerations as the prosperity of the orthodox Constantine and the tragical end of the heterodox Valens<sup>2</sup>, had won him over to the creed of Nicaea, and he spent the last year of his life in warm friendship

<sup>1</sup> We have no exact information as to the date of the destruction of the Serapeum, but it seems on the whole probable that it occurred in 391. It was still standing in all its glory when Ammianus wrote his history, apparently in 390.

<sup>2</sup> So says Suidas, s. v. Οὐαλεντινίανος.



with his old antagonist Ambrose ; a friendship which was maintained by frequent letters, when the young Emperor quitted Milan in order to superintend for a time the defence and government of Gaul. Valentinian delighted the soul of the great churchman, not only by his new-born orthodoxy, but by the spotless purity of his morals. When he heard that a certain actress in Rome was ruining many of the young nobles by her fatal charms, he sent her a twofold summons to the Imperial Court (the first messenger having been bribed to withhold his message), refused to see her himself, and sent back the humbled Delilah with a severe reprimand to the Eternal City. He was at one time accused of giving too much of his attention to the combats of the Amphitheatre ; and having heard that this part of his conduct excited reprobation, he suddenly gave up that pastime, and ordered all the beasts which had been collected for the purpose to be at once slain. He loved his two unmarried sisters, Justa and Grata, with devotion. It was considered a distinguished mark of Imperial condescension that he bestowed upon them those innocent caresses which brothers in a humbler position usually confer upon their sisters<sup>1</sup>. Though he had attained his twentieth year, for their sake he still postponed wedlock.

The picture here brought before us seems to be that of an amiable, if somewhat limited, nature, with some of the weakness, but little of the passionate selfishness, which is often found in those who are born in the purple. But we remember the strain of wild and savage cruelty, bordering on insanity, which marred the noble

<sup>1</sup> 'Manus, capita sororibus osculabatur, immemor imperii, memor germanitatis' (Ambrose, de Obitu Valentiniani, 36).

BOOK I. nature of his father, and we see in the closing scenes of  
 CH. 11. the life of Valentinian II some lack of that strong and  
 392. steady patience which made Edward III of England, and Charles VII of France, victorious over their fathers' foes.

Virtual  
 regency of  
 Arbogast  
 the Frank.

The position in which the young Emperor was left when his mentor and colleague returned within the limits of the Eastern Empire was doubtless a difficult one. He never had yet really ruled. First Justina, and then Theodosius, had guided the helm of the State, while he sat on deck under a silken canopy. Nor had Theodosius intended that the real stress of administration or of war should fall as yet on those boyish shoulders. Bauto, as we have seen, having been apparently for some years dead<sup>1</sup>, the chief command of the western armies and the chief place in the Imperial Councils was assigned to that other valiant Frankish captain, Arbogast, who had shared in the command of the army of Gratian in the Panmonian campaign of 380<sup>2</sup>, of the Theodosian army in the campaign against Maximus, and who had put to death the young and vanquished Victor in Gaul after the downfall of the usurper<sup>3</sup>. This man, now practically chief ruler of Europe west of the Adriatic, belonged apparently to a sort of clan of fortunate barbarians. If the information given us by a somewhat late historian<sup>4</sup> may be de-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 461.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 305. I have not there alluded to the fact, mentioned below, that, according to the statement of Joannes Antiochenus, Bauto and Arbogast stood to one another in the relation of father and son.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 466, 468.

<sup>4</sup> Joannes Antiochenus says: 'Αρβογάστης ἦν, ἐκ τοῦ Φράγκων γένους, Βαυδωνος . . . υἱός, φλογιοειδής τε καὶ βάρβαρος τὴν ψυχὴν: and again, 'Ο 'Αρβογάστης . . . Εὐγένιον αὐτῷ . . . ὁ θείος ἐπέστησε 'Ριχομήριος, ἡνίκα παρὰ

pended upon, he was himself the son of Count Bauto and the nephew of Count Richomer. He was still probably in the vigour of early manhood, a man of reckless courage, a master of the art of war, 'flame-like' in his all-conquering energy, and adored by his men, not merely for his other soldierly qualities, but especially because they saw that this rugged Frank cared not for gold and was quite inaccessible to all those paltry bribes which were continually soiling the hands of the Generals of Roman extraction. But with many good qualities the man was still a hard, rough, barbarian at heart, intensely fond of power, and impatient of the deference which Imperial etiquette required him to pay to the young and delicately nurtured Augustus, his nominal master. Perhaps, too, even the domestic virtues of Valentinian II, his piety, his chastity, his affection for his sisters, earned for him contempt rather than respect from this hard-featured son of the forest and the camp.

Arbogast, we are told<sup>1</sup>, laid violent hands on many of the Emperor's chosen councillors, yet none dared hinder him on account of his renown in war. Probably if we had his version of the story we should learn

Masterful  
conduct of  
Arbogast.

τὸν Θεοδοσίον μετὰ τὴν Μαξίμου νίκην ἐν τοῖς ἐφοῖς βασιλείοις ἀπήγετο (Fragm. 187, ap. Müller). Late, comparatively, as is the date of Joannes Antiochenus (the seventh century probably), we know that he drew from some good contemporary sources, and as these statements of his are not contradicted by any other historian, they seem to me deserving of more attention than they have hitherto received. (They were unknown to Tillemont when he prepared his admirable digest of materials for history.) Perhaps the greatest difficulty is in connection with Richomer, who, on this theory, was about to be appointed by Theodosius to the command of the expedition against his own nephew, Arbogast, when his career was closed by his death.

<sup>1</sup> By Joannes Antiochenus u. s.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

392.

that these were corrupt and avaricious men, who had abused the opportunities afforded them by the long minority of the Sovereign. One of these intimate counsellors, who had at least been accused of receiving bribes, was a certain Harmonius<sup>1</sup>, who had the misfortune to offend the all-powerful Frank. Arbogast drew his sword and Harmonius fled for refuge to the *secretum* of the Emperor. Even thither the angry barbarian pursued him, and while he was actually covered with the purple of the sovereign the avenging sword was driven through his heart. From that day there was suspicion and scarcely veiled hostility between Valentinian and his too powerful servant.

Valen-  
tinian  
vainly  
attempts  
to dismiss  
him.

The young Emperor sent secret messages to his colleague, Theodosius, informing him that he could no longer endure the insolence of Arbogast and praying for assistance against him. Possibly the reply was less speedy or less favourable than Valentinian expected, for he determined to try what that 'mastership of the world' which State-papers attributed to him was worth, and to see if he could not by his own power rid himself of his tyrannical minister. One day, when he was seated on his throne in full consistency, he put as much severity as he could muster into his boyish features<sup>2</sup> and handed to Arbogast a writing which relieved him from his office of Master of the Soldiery. When the barbarian had spelled

<sup>1</sup> Son of Taurus, who was Consul in 361. We are probably safe in identifying this Harmonius with the governor of Arabia (and apparently also of Antioch) who is mentioned by Libanius (Ep. 1302). Libanius vouches strongly for his integrity, but admits that he was accused of bribery.

<sup>2</sup> Δρμύτερον ὑποβλέπων (Zosimus, iv. 53).

through the wordy document, he tore it in pieces with his nails<sup>1</sup>, trampled the fragments under foot, drew his sword, and, with a voice like the roar of a lion, said, 'Thou neither gavest me this office, nor shalt thou succeed in taking it from me.' With that he turned on his heel and left the consistory.

This scene occurred at Vienne by the Rhone, whither Valentinian had gone in the train of the all-powerful Master of the Soldiery to assist in providing for the defence of Gaul from the barbarians. But while the inroads of hostile barbarians might be repelled, their peaceful invasion went successfully forward. After this failure to dislodge Arbogast, the palace of Valentinian was almost deserted, and he lived with little more pomp than a private citizen. Commands in the army, dignities in the state, were freely bestowed on the clients, and especially the Frankish clients, of Arbogast, while the entreaties and commands of the young Roman Augustus fell on unheeding ears<sup>2</sup>.

To a young and high-spirited monarch, mocked with the shadow of power and denied the reality, the situation was rapidly becoming intolerable. One day, when Arbogast appeared before him in the palace, roused by some insulting speech, Valentinian drew his sword and seemed about to attack him. A servant who stood by held his arm, and then when Arbogast — perhaps with a sneer — asked what he had meant to do with his unsheathed sword, 'I meant it for myself,' said the over-wrought lad,

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

392.

The court  
of Valen-  
tinian de-  
serted.

<sup>1</sup> Παραχρήμα τοῖς ὀνύξει διεσπάραξεν (Joan. Ant. u. s.).

<sup>2</sup> We get this curious picture from a fragment of Sulpicius Alexander, preserved by Gregory of Tours, H. F. ii. 9.



BOOK I. 'because though I am Emperor I am not allowed to  
CH. 11. do what I will <sup>1</sup>.'

<sup>392.</sup>  
 Valen-  
 tinian begs  
 Ambrose  
 to come to  
 him.  
 The health and the spirits of Valentinian were failing : he probably believed his life to be in danger, and since Theodosius was slow to help, he begged his old antagonist, but now dearly loved and honoured friend, Ambrose, to cross the Alps without delay and administer to him the rite of baptism. Besides his fear of dying unbaptized, there was probably working in Valentinian's mind some secret hope that this marvellous prelate, who had obtained an ascendancy over Justina, over Maximus, even over Theodosius himself, might be able to deliver him from the rage of the terrible Arbogast <sup>2</sup>. In fact he added to the petition for baptism a request that Ambrose would be a pledge for his friendly intentions towards 'his Count,' in other words would mediate between the sovereign and his minister.

Mysterious  
 death of  
 Valen-  
 tinian.

15 May,  
 392.

The *Silentiarius* <sup>3</sup> who was charged with this message started at evening for Milan. On the morning of the third day after his departure Valentinian, who was evidently in a state of feverish excitement, asked if he had yet returned, if Ambrose had already come. Alas ! though the Bishop does not seem to have lingered unduly, he had but just surmounted the crests of the Alps when he learned that his labour was vain and that he must return to Milan. The young Emperor had been found dead in the palace, 'self-slain' said

<sup>1</sup> This story is told us by Philostorgius, xi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This request for the presence of Ambrose in Gaul followed an abortive attempt of Valentinian himself to visit Italy, on the plea that he was wanted there to resist a barbarian invasion.

<sup>3</sup> Life-guardsmen.

the defendants of Arbogast, 'murdered by the Count's order' has been the general voice of history <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

Though Arbogast was already virtual ruler of the West, and though the death of the young Emperor in no way shook his hold upon the army or the civil functionaries, who obsequiously obeyed him, it was necessary that some one should be found to wear the purple and sign the Imperial decrees, some one also who might demand from Theodosius recognition as his colleague. The remembrance of Arbogast's barbarian extraction was too vivid to make it politic for him to assume the semblance as well as the substance of Imperial power. Since the days of Maximin the Thracian, the murderer of the young Severus Alexander, no full-blooded barbarian had been hailed as Emperor by the troops, and the precedent afforded by the wild tyranny of that savage Thracian was not encouraging. In these circumstances the choice made by Arbogast of an Imperial cipher was a singular one. There was a certain rhetorician named Eugenius who, having once 'occupied,' as a historian says, 'the sophistical throne and being of much account for his eloquence <sup>2</sup>,' in other words being a professor of some eminence, had attracted the notice of Count Richomer, had been by him recommended to his nephew Arbogast as a dexterous and supple subordinate, had been introduced into the civil service, and was now holding a 'respectable' but not illustrious place in the official hierarchy <sup>3</sup>.

392.  
Arbogast  
proclaims  
Eugenius,  
the rhe-  
torician,  
Emperor.

235.

<sup>1</sup> See Note F at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ἐπὶ σοφιστικὸν ἐγκαθήμενον θρόνον, καὶ ὑπὸ γλώττης εὐδοκιμοῦντα (Joan. Ant. Fr. 187).

<sup>3</sup> He is called Ἀντιγραφεὺς, which is thought to mean that he was one of the four *Magistri Scriniorum* (which we may perhaps translate Clerks of the Closet): only a 'spectabilis' therefore, not an 'illustis.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

392.

This man, who seems to have borne an unblemished character, besides possessing a fair amount of literary ability, and was just the sort of person who, if he had never donned the fatal Nessus-garment of the purple, might have glided happily enough through life to an undistinguished grave, had been already assailed by Arbogast with the tempting offer of the diadem. Eugenius however refused to accept the dangerous gift, and apparently, so long as Valentinian lived, he persisted in this refusal. After the tragedy in the palace at Vienne he consented, as his tempter expressed it, 'no longer to throw away the gifts of Fortune.' The usual donative was no doubt given to the army, the acclamations of the soldiers were ready for any one whom their adored general should present to them as his choice, and the clever professor, hailed by the troops as Emperor and Augustus, found himself promoted almost at a bound from 'the sophistical throne' to the throne of the universe,—a strange revolution indeed which, in the scarcely exaggerated language of the poet Claudian,

'Made the barbarian's lackey lord of all<sup>1</sup>.'

Funeral  
rites of  
Valen-  
tinian.

The news of Valentinian's death was probably brought to Theodosius by a messenger whom Ambrose sent to learn the Imperial pleasure as to the manner of disposing of the corpse of the young Emperor. Less brutal than Maximus, Arbogast had permitted the body

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, *De iii Cons. Honorii*, 66; *De iv Cons. Honorii*, 74. If I rightly understand the evidently corrupted entry in 'Cuspiniani Chronicon,' the elevation of Eugenius did not take place till the 22nd of August, more than three months after the death of Valentinian. This looks like prolonged resistance on the part of Eugenius to the schemes of his patron.

of his late sovereign to be transported to Milan, where it lay probably in some chapel awaiting burial, and was daily visited by the weeping sisters Justa and Grata. Pale and tearful always, they came back from these sad visitations paler than ever, and for their sakes Ambrose pleaded for an early interment, even though the rite might lack some of the gorgeous pageantry with which the body of Valentinian, the father, had been deposited in the Church of the Apostles. Theodosius at once consented. There was a vast porphyry sarcophagus at Milan, resembling that in which the rough soldier Maximian, colleague of Diocletian, had been at last laid to rest after his stormy old age, and herein the young Emperor was inurned, his remains being covered with slabs of most precious porphyry. Ambrose pronounced in his honour a funeral oration, in which some rather commonplace consolations, addressed to the weeping sisters, were mingled with passages of real and pathetic eloquence. ‘How are the mighty fallen! How far more swiftly have the wheels of both lives run down than the current of Rhone himself! Oh Gratian and Valentinian! my beautiful and beloved ones! in what narrow limits were your lives confined! How near the places of your dying! How close together your sepulchres! Inseparable in heart while you lived, in death you are not divided. Harmless ye were as doves, swift as eagles, innocent as lambs. The arrow of Gratian turned not back, and the justice of Valentinian returned not empty. How have the mighty fallen without fighting!

*Ambrose's  
oration, De  
Obitu  
Valen-  
tiniani.*

‘I grieve for thee, my son Gratian, whose love was very sweet to me. In thy perils thou didst ask for me: in thy last extremity thou didst call upon me: thou



BOOK I. didst sorrow for my sorrow more than for thine own.  
CH. 11.

392.

I grieve for thee too, son Valentinian, who wast very beautiful in mine eyes. Through me didst thou think to be delivered from danger: thou didst love me not only as a father but as thy redeemer and liberator. Thou saidst, "Think you that I shall see my father?" Alas! that I did not earlier know thy desire. Alas! that thou didst not sooner in secret send for me. Ah me! what pledges of love have I lost! "How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished!"

Galla urges  
Theodosius  
to avenge  
her brother's  
death.

Though Justa and Grata could only weep timid tears for their vanished brother, it may easily be imagined that Galla, the wife of the Lord of the East, thought not of sorrow only but of revenge. When she heard of the death of her brother she filled the palace with her cries, and doubtless during the short remainder of her life she ceased not to adjure Theodosius by every motive of gratitude, of honour, and of kinship to avenge the blood of Valentinian. Towards the end of 392 an embassy from the Emperor Eugenius appeared at the Court of Constantinople. The chief spokesman was an Athenian named Rufinus—a different person of course from the minister of Theodosius—who, no doubt, pleaded eloquently for peace between the different members of the same Republic, while several obsequious Gaulish Bishops—the same sort of vermin that had applauded the execution of Priscillian and condemned the uncourtliness of Martin—conveyed to Theodosius their valuable assurances that Arbogast was innocent of the death of his colleague.

Embassy  
from  
Eugenius  
to Theo-  
dosius.

To this embassy the Eastern Emperor made a diplomatic reply, not accepting the proffered friendship of the Professor in the purple, nor yet openly threaten-



ing war, which nevertheless all the Roman world probably knew to be inevitable.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

Was it caution, was it indolence, was it reluctance to array one half of the Empire in battle against the other half which again, as in the war against Maximus, caused such inexplicable delay in the movements of Theodosius? Certainly he had some excuse for hesitation, for Arbogast, the 'flame-like' Frank, was, as he well knew, no mere intriguer like Maximus, but a brave and well-trying soldier, probably now the best general in the Empire, for the veteran Richomer (his kinsman according to the historian before-quoted <sup>1</sup>) died at Constantinople shortly before the commencement of the war. But whatever the cause, it is clear that more than two years elapsed after the death of Valentinian II before his brother-in-law stood with an avenging army on the soil of Italy.

392.  
Delay on  
the part  
of Theo-  
dosius.

These two years of waiting were employed by Arbogast and his puppet-Emperor doubtless for the most part in warlike preparations. They were occupied partly by a campaign beyond the Rhine which compelled the Alamanni and the Franks to sue once more for peace with the Empire. But they were also signalised by an attempt such as that which Julian had made thirty years before to roll back the current of men's thoughts into the deserted channels of Paganism. Eugenius, nominally a Christian, but essentially a rhetorician, was willing as a matter of policy to give another lease of existence to the Olympian gods whose names and rivalries and amours he had himself doubtless interwoven many a time as conventional commonplaces in his orations. And his patron Arbogast, probably still,

Paganising  
policy of  
Eugenius  
and Arbo-  
gast.

392-3.

<sup>1</sup> Joannes Antiochenus.

BOOK I.

CH. 11.

39<sup>2</sup>-4.

like the rest of his Frankish countrymen, a heathen, certainly no friend to Christian Bishops and the Christian clergy, was also willing, nay eager, to conciliate the old Conservative aristocracy of Rome by rebuilding the fallen altars and opening again the dust-begrimed temples of their ancestors. Thus did Odin lend a helping hand to the battered Jupiter of the Capitol and assist him to reascend, and for a little while to maintain, his tottering throne.

The heathenism of the Mediterranean countries was all concentrated in the city by the Tiber. It had taken refuge in that old home of Empire as the Jews, when Jerusalem was besieged by Titus, took refuge in the Temple of Jehovah, and there it was prepared to make its last desperate stand against the new faith ; to try

‘ What reinforcements it might gain from hope,  
If not, what resolution from despair.’

We have seen with what strange pertinacity the Senators had urged on successive Emperors their petition for the restoration of the Altar of Victory. During the last sad months of the young Valentinian's life another deputation had waited upon him in Gaul with the same monotonous request, and had received a rebuff which showed that even when not fortified by the presence of Ambrose, Valentinian could, in religious matters, hold his own against the terrible Arbogast. Now, after the accession of Eugenius, they again appeared, preferring the same request. Liberty to re-erect the altar seems to have been at once conceded. The closed temples of the gods were also opened without delay. It was a harder matter to obtain the restoration of the revenues which had formerly been

devoted to the service of the temples, but which had perhaps now been confiscated to the Imperial exchequer. Twice did a deputation plead in vain for this concession, but at length, when Arbogast also condescended to endorse the petition, Eugenius unbent from his sternness and granted the Temple-revenues, not ostensibly to the Temple-service, but to the petitioners themselves, leaving it to them to bestow those revenues on the gods of the heathen if they were disposed so to do<sup>1</sup>. So might some Stuart king, secretly inclined to the old religion, have re-granted certain abbey-lands, not directly to one of the old monastic orders, but to some devout Roman Catholic courtier, well knowing that he, on the first opportunity, would re-convey them to the old uses.

A leading member of the deputation which obtained these important concessions from the new Emperor was Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, Praetorian Prefect of Italy. This Roman nobleman, who at the time of the accession of Eugenius was verging on the sixtieth year of his age, has been made strangely real to us by a recent discovery. He was a cousin of Symmachus, and was yet more closely connected with him through the marriage of their children, the son of Symmachus having married the daughter of Flavianus. But the ninety-one letters addressed to Flavianus by his kinsman Symmachus, though they slightly illustrate the changes in the fortunes of the receiver, and though they have some interest as representing the croakings of one old Roman raven to another over the downfall of the religion and customs of their forefathers, do not add much to our knowledge of the career and character of

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.  
392-4.

Flavianus,  
a leader of  
the Pagan  
party.

<sup>1</sup> Ambrose, Epist. i. 57. 6, and Paulinus, Vita Ambrosii, 26.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

392-4.

Flavianus. Far more valuable for our purpose is a frantic and bitter libel upon him, the work evidently of a Christian scribe, which has lately been discovered at the end of a MS. of the poems of Prudentius<sup>1</sup>. The author repeats in sonorous and tolerably lucid hexameters the commonplaces of Christian apologists as to the disreputable lives of the gods of Olympus. But when from Jupiter and Venus he descends to Flavianus (not named but clearly indicated) he is so furious as to be barely intelligible. Only we can perceive that Flavianus, like most of the pagans of his day, was very eclectic in his religion. No cult seems to have been unwelcome so long as it was not the cult of the Christians. He was 'a worshipper of Serapis, ever friendly to the Etruscans, and learned in their science of infusing poison into the veins<sup>2</sup>.' He had submitted, like many Roman Senators of his day, to the disgusting rite of *Taurobolium*, a literal baptism of blood which formed part of the worship of Mithras, and which, like other rites of that oriental superstition, seems to have aped and exaggerated the symbolic rites of Christianity<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This MS. in the Imperial Library at Paris (Fonds Latin, No. 8084) was published by Delisle in the 'Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes,' and afterwards by Morel in the 'Revue Archéologique,' June, 1868. See also an article by Mommsen: *Hermes*, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sarapidis cultor, Etruscis semper amicus

Funderè qui incautis studuit concreta venena,

Mille nocendi iras, totidem conquereret artes.' (ll. 50-52.)

Possibly the satirist only means to accuse Flavianus of instilling the poison of heathenism into the minds of the citizens.

<sup>3</sup> The person upon whom the *Taurobolium* was to be performed was crowned with a mitre and a golden wreath, and was then let down into a hole in the ground, over which a scaffolding had been erected, in which orifices had been pierced at regular intervals. A bull, crowned with garlands, was then brought upon this scaffolding, and

He took part apparently in the mystic procession on the 5th of March, when the goddess Isis, accompanied by a long train of priests arrayed in white linen, set sail on the Tiber in quest of the slain Osiris. In the seven days' feast of the Great Goddess<sup>1</sup>, Cybele, he, with other Senators, guarded her chariot and pushed on the silver lions which appeared to draw the Mother of the Gods. And, reviving the long-discontinued festival of the Amburbium, a festival which apparently had fallen into disuse since the time of Aurelian, he caused the priests to march in solemn procession round the city<sup>2</sup> with three victims, a sow, a sheep, and a bull, which at the end of the ceremony were offered up on the altars of Mother Earth and of Ceres or of Father Mars. The old wooden statues of the gods were perhaps brought forth and placed on couches in the streets and *fora* of the city, with costly viands set out on tables before them and incense burning under their nostrils<sup>3</sup>: and the merry but indecent dances with which men and women had once celebrated the gay rites of Flora again twinkled through the streets<sup>4</sup>.

270-275.

stabbed to death by a priest of Mithras. The blood of the victim, showered down through the orifices upon the worshipper below, was held to purify him from sin. He probably wore the blood-stained garments through the banquet that followed, and for the rest of the day. The efficacy of this blood-baptism was believed to continue for twenty years (Marquardt, 'Römische Staatsverwaltung,' iii. 88; quoting Prudentius, 'Peristephanon,' x. 1005-1050).

<sup>1</sup> Megalensia, 4-10 April.

<sup>2</sup> This was called 'lustrare Urbem.' In the corresponding rural feast of the Ambarvalia, 'lustrabant agros.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Ornaret lauro postes, convivia daret,  
Pollutos panes infectos ture vapore  
Poneret in risum.' (ll. 41-43.)

This seems to describe a *lectisternium*.

<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps worth noticing that all the rites described by our



BOOK I.

CH. 11.

392-4.

The populace of Rome, who for at least two generations had been accustomed to think of Paganism as a defeated religion, existing only by sufferance and celebrating its rites by stealth, were doubtless amazed to see it thus stalking abroad again in full day-light and asserting itself as the religion of the State. There does not seem to have been any persecution of the Christians, but inducements were not wanting to prevail upon time-servers to desert their faith. One man<sup>1</sup> was persuaded to apostatise by a commission to administer the Imperial domain in Africa, another by the Proconsulate of that wealthy province<sup>2</sup>. The old faith in auguries too began to revive. Flavianus, who was undoubtedly a learned man according to the standard of that age, had studied deeply the old treatises on divination and was perpetually turning over with curious eyes the entrails of the sacrificial victims to read there the will of the gods. Like most augurs, especially political augurs, he could read there the omens which he most desired, and he confidently

satirist seem to have taken place in the spring: the Voyage of Isis on the 25th of March, the Megalensia from 4th to 10th of April, Floralia 28th April to 3rd of May, Amburbium on the 29th of May. Perhaps we have here a description of the state of the City during the spring-months of 394, when the heathen party were waiting, in an agony of expectation, for the commencement of the campaign against Theodosius.

<sup>1</sup> Leucadius, possibly the Gaulish governor for whom St. Martin interceded (see p. 452).

<sup>2</sup> This Proconsul was Martianus, who had been 'vicarius Italiae' in 384. His son Maximian was Prefect of Rome in 409, and was sent by the Senate on an embassy to Ravenna. These appointments to offices in Africa by the party of Eugenius make me doubt Gùldenpenning's statement (p. 219, n. 43) that Africa remained true to Theodosius.

assured Eugenius that in the war, which all men knew to be impending, he should conquer and the religion of the Nazarene should be overthrown.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.  
392-4.

Of course there was deep indignation in all Christian hearts at these puny attempts to imitate the mighty Apostate. Theodosius, as if to emphasize his unshaken loyalty to the Christian faith, put forth, in November 392, only a few months after he had heard of the death of his young colleague, an edict against idolatry<sup>1</sup>. No one in any station of life, high or low, was to be permitted to offer up innocent victims to senseless idols, nor in the secrecy of his home to seek to propitiate the Lares by fire, the Genius with wine, or the Penates with sweet incense, to kindle sacrificial lights, to throw frankincense on the fire, nor to hang up garlands. The attempt to derive auguries from the examination of the steaming entrails of a sacrifice was pronounced an act of treason against the Emperor; and all places from which the smoke of incense had ascended in honour of an idol were to be confiscated to the Emperor's use. Clearly if the Old Rome was inclined to rebuild the altars of the Capitol, the New Rome would keep the faith of the Cross inviolate.

Anti-Pagan legislation of Theodosius.

In Italy Ambrose withdrew from contact with the powers of darkness. Like Milton's Abdiel,

Ambrose is still erect.

'Amid innumerable false he stood  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified.'

He left Milan when Eugenius approached it; he retired to Bologna, to Faenza, finally to Florence. From thence he wrote one of his noblest letters<sup>2</sup> to the new Emperor, describing the earlier phases of the discussion

<sup>1</sup> Cod. Theod. xvi. 10, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. i. 57.

BOOK I. about the Altar of Victory, and sharply rebuking him  
 CH. 11. for being less true to his Christian faith than either of  
 392-4. the young sovereigns, Gratian and Valentinian. 'Though  
 the Imperial power be great, yet consider, oh Emperor,  
 how great is God. He sees the hearts of all, He  
 questions their innermost consciences. He knows all  
 deeds before they are done. He knows the secrets of  
 thy breast. You monarchs will not allow one of your  
 subjects to deceive you and think ye that ye can hide  
 anything from God?'

The relations between the upstart Emperor and the self-exiled Bishop grew doubtless more hostile all through the year 393, and when at length in the summer of 394 Arbogast set forth to war with Theodosius, he and the Prefect Flavianus said in the haughtiness of their hearts as they passed out from the gates of Milan: 'When we come back we will stable our horses in the great Basilica, and all these sleek churchmen shall be drilled to arms by our centurions.' And yet even Arbogast might have learned how mighty and all-pervading was the power which he had thus arrayed against himself and his Imperial puppet. For in the campaign against the Franks of the Rhine, which probably filled up the summer of 393, he had met one of the many kings of that fierce tribe, who asked him 'Dost thou know Ambrose?' 'Yes,' said Arbogast, 'I know him and he loves me well, and I have often dined with him.' 'Then that is the cause, Sir Count, why you have conquered me, because you are loved by that man who says to the Sun, "Stand still," and it stands.' Already the fame of a great saint had learned to travel over mountains and rivers: already superstitious fears were creeping behind the mail of bar-

barian kings and making them feel that it was dangerous to war against the God of the Christians<sup>1</sup>.

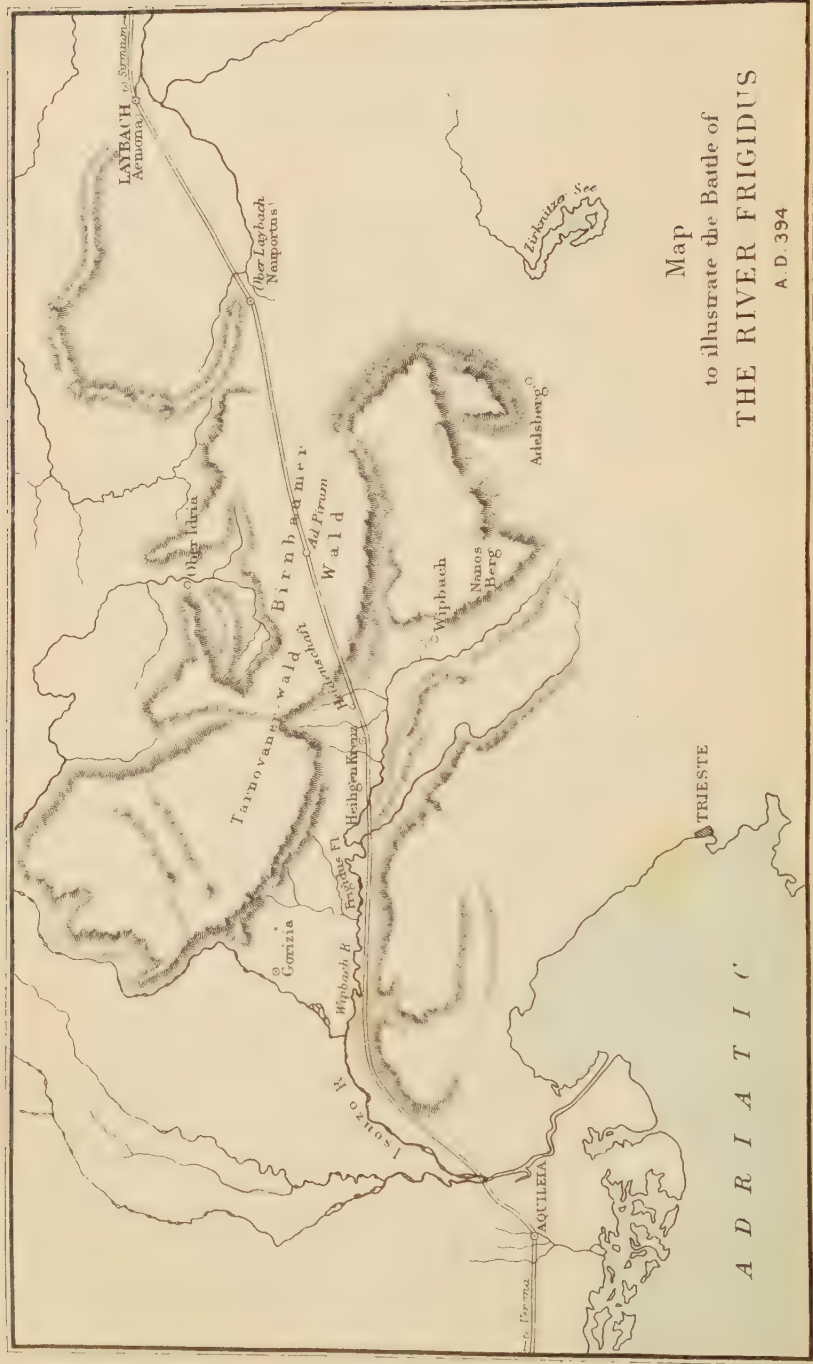
BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

Meanwhile, Theodosius with leisurely calmness, but also with unshaken determination, was making his preparations for the great campaign. All through the year 393 the movement of troops along the roads, and the clang of the armourer's hammer in the arsenals of the East, gave token of the coming fray. In order to secure the succession to his own family, and to mark more emphatically that he recognised no colleague in the rhetorician Eugenius, he associated his younger son Honorius, a boy of nine years old, as Augustus with himself and Arcadius<sup>2</sup>. The people of Constantinople saw with superstitious fear a darkness, almost like that of night, overspread the city on the morning of the ceremony which marked this event. The south wind blew up dense masses of cloud from the Bithynian plains and all the shores of the Bosphorus were wrapped in obscurity. But then, when the soldiers were acclaiming the new Augustus, suddenly the clouds dispersed, Chalcedon again became visible from the capital, and the returning gladness of Nature was hailed as an

393.  
Honorius  
associated  
in the  
Empire.

<sup>1</sup> We derive these two stories from the interesting but marvelous life of Ambrose written by his notary, Paulinus. He says that the second story was told him by a very religious young man, who was cup-bearer to Arbogast in his Frankish campaign.

<sup>2</sup> The association of Honorius is assigned by Socrates to the 10th January, 393. Some authors, understanding by the darkness an eclipse, have insisted on transferring the ceremony to 20th November, 393, which was the date of an eclipse. But Clinton and Sievers argue, as it seems to me rightly, for Socrates' date. The darkness, which is most fully described by Claudian (though with some fanciful embellishments in honour of his patron) does not seem to have been due to an eclipse, but to an unusually thick canopy of cloud. (See Claudian, iv Cons. Honorii, 170-196).



Map  
to illustrate the Battle of  
THE RIVER FRIGIDUS  
A. D. 394

ADRIATIC



gustus and other barbarians from across the Danube, perhaps the remnant of Athanaric's Visigoths, perhaps Ostrogoths and Gepidae, and even some of their Hunnish conquerors, trooped across the broad river, scenting bloodshed and spoil in the fluttering of the wings of the Roman eagles. When the army was already on the point of marching, she for whose sake the whole campaign was undertaken vanished from her husband's side. The beautiful Empress Galla died, having given birth to a little daughter, who was one day to rule the Empire of the West under the title of Galla Placidia Augusta. Theodosius, as a historian<sup>1</sup> says, was mindful of the Homeric maxim—

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394

May, 394.

‘In war, with stern hearts we entomb our dead,  
And but for one day must our tears be shed,’

and, though with an aching heart, set forth from Constantinople, only pausing to pay his devotions in the Church which he had reared in the suburb of the Hebdomon in honour of John the Baptist.

As before, he moved his troops along the highway that connected Sirmium with Aquileia. By this road, as has been before hinted, the Alps may be said to be turned rather than crossed. At one point indeed, between Laybach and Gorizia, a shoulder of the Julian Alps has to be surmounted, but as the highest point of the pass is less than 2000 feet above the level of the sea, it must not be associated in our minds with those ideas of Alpine hardship which suggest themselves in connection with the St. Bernard, the Splügen, or even the Brenner. On the summit of the pass there grew, at the time of the Roman road-makers, a pear-tree,

Theodosius' march through Illyricum.

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, quoting the *Iliad*, xix. 228–9.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394.

Battle-field  
of the  
Frigidus.

conspicuous, we must suppose, from afar by its cloud of white blossoms. This tree gave to the neighbouring station the name of *Ad Pirum*, and the memory of it has now for many centuries been preserved, in another tongue, by the appellation of the *Birnbaumer Wald*, given to the whole of the high plateau which the road once traversed. Standing on the crest of this pass, in the place where probably 2000 years ago the pear-tree was blooming, the spectator beholds spread out before him a landscape with some very distinctive features, which the imagination can easily convert into a battle-field. To his right, all along the northern horizon, soars the bare and lofty ridge of the Tarnovaner Wald, about 4000 feet high. None but a very adventurous or a badly beaten army would seek a passage there. Opposite, to the south and west runs a range of gently swelling hills, somewhat resembling our own Sussex downs, the last outliers in this direction of the Julian Alps. On the left hand, to the south-east, the Birnbaumer Wald rises towards the abrupt cliff of the Nanos Berg, a mountain as high as the Tarnovaner Wald, which, conspicuous from afar, seems by its singular shape to proclaim itself to travellers, both from Italy and from Austria, as the end of the Alps. Set in this framework of hills lies a fruitful and well-cultured valley, 'The Paradise of Carniola',<sup>1</sup> deriving its name from its river, which, burrowing its way between hay-fields and orchards, seems disinclined to claim the visitor's notice, though entitled to it for more reasons than one. For this river, the Wipbach of our own day, the Frigidus Fluvius of the age of Theodosius, has not only historic fame, but is a phenomenon full of interest

<sup>1</sup> Schaubach's *Die Deutschen Alpen*, v. 368.

to the physical geographer. Close to the little town of Wipbach it bursts forth from the foot of the cliffs of the Birnbaumer Wald; no little rivulet such as one spring might nourish, but 'a full-fed river,' as deep and strong as the Aar at Thun, or the Reuss at Lucerne, like also to both those streams in the colour of its pale-blue waters, and, even in the hottest days of summer, unconquerably cool<sup>1</sup>. Many a Roman legionary, marching along the great high road from Aquileia to Sirmium, has had reason to bless the refreshing waters of the mountain-born Frigidus. We know somewhat more than the philosophers of the camp could tell him of the causes of this welcome phenomenon. The fact is that in the Wipbach Thal we are in the heart of one of those limestone regions where Nature so often amuses us with her wild vagaries. Only half a day's march distant lies the entrance to those vast chambers of imagery, the caverns of Adelsberg. The river Poik, which rushes roaring through those caverns for two or three miles, emerges thence into the open country, disappears, reappears, again disappears, again reappears, and thus bears three different names in the course of its short history. A little further from Wipbach lies that other wonder of Carniola, the Zirknitzer See, where fishing in spring, harvesting in summer, and skating in winter, all take place over the same ground. The chilly Wipbach bursting suddenly forth from its seven sources in the Birnbaumer Wald is, it will be seen, but one of a whole family of similar marvels.

<sup>1</sup> The Wipbach has seven large sources, besides numberless small ones, all at the foot of the same cliffs. The largest and most picturesque of the sources is behind the palace and in the garden of Count Lantieri.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394-  
Position of  
the armies.

Leaving the blue waters of the Frigidus we remount the hills, and stand with Theodosius by the pear-tree on the crest of the pass. By his unexpected energy he has gained the heights, before the enemy could anticipate him, but that is all. Far away below him stretch the tents of the army of Eugenius; they line the sides of the river and fill all the valley. The regular troops of Theodosius, the so-called Roman legionaries, are commanded by the veteran Timasius and under him by the Emperor's kinsman Stilicho. But true to his constant policy, Theodosius has surrounded himself with a strong band of barbarian auxiliaries, and the commanders of these skin-clothed Teutons are some of the most influential men in his army. There is Gainas the Goth, the same man who, six years hence, being general-in-chief of all the forces of the Eastern Empire, will rebel against Arcadius, son of Theodosius, and will all but succeed in capturing Constantinople. Gainas is an Arian Christian, as are most of his countrymen by this time; but by his side, with perhaps equal dignity, rides the Alan Saul, a heathen yet, notwithstanding his Biblical name. There too is the Catholic Bacurius, general of the household troops, who fought under Valens at Hadrianople, a man of Armenian origin, and of royal birth, who is 'destitute of all evil inclinations and perfectly versed in the art of war<sup>1</sup>.' There also, carefully noticing the lie of these mountain passes, and veiling his eagerness for the first sight of Italy, is a young Visigothic chieftain named Alaric.

Zosimus,  
iv. 57.

Theodosius gave the order to descend into the valley

<sup>1</sup> Bacurius, as we learn from the Church historian Rufinus, was originally King of the Iberi. He was a fervent Christian, and Rufinus had made his acquaintance when he was Dux Palaestinae.

and join battle. Owing to the roughness of the ground over which they were moving, the baggage-train broke down. A long and vexatious halt ensued. Theodosius, to whose mind the religious aspect of this war was ever present, and whose enthusiasm was at least as strongly stirred as was that of Constantine at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, rode forward to the head of his column, and in words borrowed from the old Hebrew Prophet, exclaimed, 'Where is the Lord God of Theodosius?' The troops caught the fervour of his spirit, the obstacle was quickly surmounted, and the army descended to the conflict.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394

The weight of that day's battle fell upon the Teutonic auxiliaries of the Emperor, and they were not successful. Bacurius, the brave and loyal-hearted Armenian, fell; 10,000 of the barbarians perished, and the remnant, with their leaders, retired, but not in disorder, from the battle-field. When night fell, Theodosius was not indeed absolutely routed, but his position had become one of extreme peril. Eugenius, considering the victory as good as won, passed the night in feasting and in distributing largesse to the officers and soldiers who had most distinguished themselves in the encounter. Theodosius was advised by his generals to retreat during the night, and adjourn the campaign till next spring. But the soldier could not bear to retire before his grammarian rival, and the Christian refused to allow the standard of the Cross to confess itself vanquished by the figure of Hercules, which adorned the banners of Eugenius. He found a solitary place in a hill behind his army, and there he spent the night in earnest prayer to the Lord of the Universe. When the dawn was creeping over the Birnbaumer Wald he fell

First day's  
battle,  
Sept. 5.



BOOK I. asleep. In his vision two men mounted on white  
CH. 11. steeds and clothed in white raiment appeared to him.

394-  
The  
Emperor's  
vision.

They were not the great twin brethren who stood by Aulus on the margin of the Lake Regillus; they were the Apostles St. John and St. Philip, and they bade Theodosius be of good courage, since they were sent to fight for him in the coming day. The Emperor awoke and resumed his devotions yet more earnestly. While he was thus engaged a centurion came to inform him of a remarkable dream which had visited one of the soldiers in his company. The dream of the soldier was the very same as that of the Augustus, and the marvellous coincidence of course gladdened all hearts.

Second  
day's bat-  
tle, Sept. 6.

Yet when in the early dawn the Emperor began again to move his troops down towards the scene of yesterday's encounter, he saw a sight which boded little good. Far back amid the recesses of the mountains were soldiers of the enemy, in ambush though imperfectly concealed, and threatening his line of retreat. The peril seemed more urgent than ever, but he contrived to call a parley with the officers of these troops, invisible probably to Eugenius, though seen by his antagonist, and he found them willing, almost eager, to enter his service, if they could be assured of pay and promotion. The contract (not one of which either party had reason to be proud) was soon concluded, and Theodosius recorded on his tablets the high military offices which he bound himself to bestow on Count Arbitrio, the leader of the ambuscade, and on his staff<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It seems probable, though I do not think it is distinctly stated by any authority, that the Prefect Flavianus was with these troops, and that, being unable to prevent their desertion, he perished by his own hand. (See Seeck's *Prolegomena* to the letters of Symmachus, p. cxix.)

Strengthened by this reinforcement he made the sign of the cross, which was the concerted signal of battle, and his soldiers clashed against the foe, who in the security of victory were perhaps hardly ready for the onset. Yet the second day's battle was obstinately fought, and was at length decided by an event which may well have seemed miraculous to minds already raised to fever-heat by this terribly even contest between the new faith and the old. In the very crisis of the battle a mighty wind arose from the north, that is to say from behind the troops of Theodosius, who were standing on the slopes of the Tarnovaner Wald. The impetuous gusts blew the dust into the faces of the Eugenians, and not only thus destroyed their aim, but even carried back their own weapons upon themselves and made it impossible to wound one of their adversaries with dart or with *pilum*. The modern traveller, without considering himself bound to acknowledge a miraculous interposition, has no difficulty in admitting the general truth of this narrative, which is strongly vouched for by contemporary authors. All over the *Karst* (as the high plateau behind Trieste is called) the ravages of the Bora, or north-east wind, have long been notorious<sup>1</sup>. Heavily-laden waggons have been overturned by its fury, and where no shelter is afforded from its blasts houses are not built, and trees will not grow<sup>2</sup>. From the fruitful and well-clothed aspect of

<sup>1</sup> Is the fury of the Bora owing to the abrupt termination here of the great Alpine wall, or to some conflict between the climate of the Adriatic shores and that of the valleys of the affluents of the Danube?

<sup>2</sup> I take the following account of a recent outbreak of the Bora from the *Standard* of 31 December, 1890:—‘But it is at Trieste that the South has most completely belied its conventional reputation. For there, as our Vienna correspondent informs us, the “Bora” has

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394.

the Wipbach Thal it might be supposed that it was sheltered by its mountain bulwarks from this terrible visitation. But it is not so. All the way up from the village of Heidenschafft to the crest of the pass which bounds the Wipbach Thal, the Bora rages. Not many years ago the commander of a squadron of Austrian cavalry was riding with his men past the very village which probably marks the site of the battle. An old man well versed in the signs of the weather warned him not to proceed, because he saw that the Bora was about to blow. 'No, indeed,' laughed the captain. 'What would people say if soldiers on horseback stopped because of the wind?' He continued his march, the predicted storm arose, and he lost eight men and three horses, swept by its fury into the waters of the Wipbach<sup>1</sup>. The same cause which in our lifetime struck those eight men off the muster-rolls of the imperial-royal army, decided the battle of the Frigidus near fifteen centuries ago, and gave the whole Roman

been blowing with a violence which the Illyrians had begun to regard as a thing of the past. For many years it has not been found necessary to stretch ropes along the streets of Trieste for pedestrians to hold on by, and it was the exception rather than the rule for vessels to be prevented from communicating with the shore, even when the Bora was blowing with its utmost strength. This diminution of its force was attributed to the gradual afforesting of the Karst, the upland plateau over which it swept unchecked in former times. But the ferocity of the present gale showed no abatement of its vigour. The ropes had again to be stretched along the streets, and, though the temperature was only nine degrees below freezing, all the ships in the harbour were covered with ice, and several slipped their anchors, or even had their cables broken.'

<sup>1</sup> It was interesting to hear this story (unsolicited by any question on my part, but which at once recalled Claudian's well-known lines) from the mouth of 'Michele il Tedesco,' the vetturino who drove me from Gorizia to Adelsberg (1878).

world to the family of Theodosius and the dominion of the Catholic faith.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

The poet Claudian, describing the events of this memorable day, with all the audacity of a courtier makes them redound to the glory of his patron Honorius, son of Theodosius, a boy in the eleventh year of his age, who was a thousand miles away from the fighting, but to whose auspices, as he was Consul for the year, his father's victory might, by a determined flatterer, be ascribed.

394.  
Claudian's  
story of the  
battle.

‘Down from the mountain, summoned by thy name  
Upon your foes the chilling north wind came;  
Back to the sender's heart his javelin hurled,  
And from his powerless grasp the spear-staff whirled.  
Oh greatly loved of heaven! from forth his caves  
Æolus sends his armed Storms, thy slaves.  
Æther itself obeys thy sovereign will,  
And conscript Winds move to thy bugles shrill.  
The Alpine snows grew ruddy: the Cold Stream  
Now, with changed waters, glided dank with steam,  
And, but that every wave was swoln with gore,  
Had fainted 'neath the ghastly load she bore.’

De III  
Consulatu  
Honorii,  
93-101.

Eugenius, who seems not to have been in the thick of the fight, and who still deemed himself secure of victory, saw some of his soldiers running swiftly towards him. ‘Are you bringing me Theodosius in bonds,’ he shouted, ‘according to my orders?’ ‘By no means, they answered; ‘he is conqueror, and we are pardoned on condition of carrying you to him.’ They then loaded him with chains and bore him into the presence of Theodosius, who upbraided him with the murder of Valentinian, and, almost as if it were an equal crime, with setting up the statue of Hercules for worship. Eugenius grovelled at the feet of his rival, begging for

Death of  
Eugenius.



BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394.

Death of  
Arbogast.

life, but his entreaties were cut short by a soldier who severed his head from his body with a sword. This ghastly proof of failure carried round the camp upon a pole determined the last waverers to throw themselves on the mercy of Theodosius, who was now, at any rate, the only legitimate Roman Emperor. This mercy was easily extended to them, policy as well as religion making it incumbent on the Emperor to convert his late foes as speedily as possible into loyal soldiers. The barbarian Arbogast, of whose generalship on the second day of the battle we hear nothing, fled to the steepest and most rugged part of the mountains (perhaps the Nanos Berg), and after wandering about for two days, finding every gorge which led down into the plain carefully watched, fell upon his sword, like King Saul among the mountains of Gilboa, and so perished. Thus fell the last of the antagonists of Theodosius<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The question of the exact site of the battle of Frigidus should be determined after a careful examination of the topography, such as no historian seems yet to have thought it worth while to institute. The slight consideration which I have been able to give to the subject on the spot leads me to believe that the battle was fought near Heiden-schafft; the forces of Theodosius being, as I have said, on the lower slopes of the Tarnovaner Wald, and those of Eugenius in the valley and upon the range of lower hills opposite. There are three names of towns or villages in the valley, all of which might possibly be connected with the battle. *Battuglia*, about an hour below Heiden-schafft, might be a corruption of Battaglia. The town of *Heiligenkreuz*, conspicuous on its pedestal of rock jutting out into the valley, may perhaps have derived its name originally from some erection by the Emperor in honour of the Holy Cross, which was his battle-signal, and allusions to which were so constantly on his lips during those two critical days. And is it too much to suggest that *Heidenschafft* itself may, either as a corruption of *Heidenschlacht* or in some other way, be connected with 'the overthrow of the Heathens'? Three languages, Italian, German, and Slovenic, are jammed up against one another in



When the battle was ended, one of the earliest acts of the Emperor was to overturn the statues of Jupiter with which the idolatrous usurper had garnished and, as he seems to have hoped, guarded the Alpine passes. The hand of each statue of the god grasped, and was in act to hurl, a golden thunderbolt. When the statues were overthrown Theodosius distributed these golden bolts among his outriders. 'By such lightnings,' said the laughing soldiers, 'may we often be struck!' And the stately Emperor, according to St. Augustine, unbent from his usual high demeanour and 'permitted the merriment of the soldiers.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394.  
Overthrow  
of the idols.

As after the defeat of Maximus, so now, Theodosius showed himself humane and moderate in the hour of victory. There was no proscription of the adherents of Eugenius or confiscation of their property. The children of Eugenius and Arbogast, though not members of the Christian Church, had taken refuge in the Basilica at Milan. Ambrose, true to the noble instincts of his nature, at once addressed a letter to Theodosius beseeching him to have mercy on the fallen. The Emperor's reply consigned them provisionally to the protection of an Imperial notary<sup>1</sup>: and before long a full and complete amnesty arrived at Milan, granted to the petition of Ambrose who had visited the Emperor at Aquileia, and had been assured that no reward was too great for the prayers which had earned the fateful victory.

Clemency  
of Theo-  
dosius.

There was, however, some note of censure and this corner of Austria, and probably no one of them is spoken with accuracy.

<sup>1</sup> 'Johannes, tunc tribunus et notarius, qui nunc praeffectus est' (Paulinus, Vita Ambrosii, 51). Compare also Augustine, De Civitate Dei, v. 26.

BOOK I. ignominy attached to the name of the deceased  
 CH. 11. Flavianus, for a tablet discovered in the Forum of  
 394. Trajan records what we should call 'the reversal of his  
 431. attainder,' thirty-six years after this time, by the grand-  
 son of Theodosius at the request of the grandson of  
 Flavianus<sup>1</sup>.

Proceed-  
 ings in  
 Rome as  
 described  
 by Zosi-  
 mus.

That the defeat of Eugenius dealt a real death-blow to the recrudescent Paganism of Rome there can be no doubt, but how the death-blow was administered is by no means clear. Zosimus tells us<sup>2</sup> that Theodosius visited Rome with his little son Honorius; that he presented him to the Romans as their Emperor, and constituted Stilicho his guardian: that he then called the Senate together and exhorted them to forsake the errors of heathenism, and embrace the faith of the Christians, which would free them from every stain of impiety and guilt. The Senate, however, according to this historian refused to abandon the rights which had for near 2000 years secured victory to their city: whereupon Theodosius fell back on a mere financial argument, asserting that the necessities of the military chest forbade the expenditure which had hitherto been lavished upon the heathen sacrifices. The Senate replied that the sacrifices of the State must be offered up at the State's expense; but Theodosius was inexorable, and struck the provision for their maintenance out of the Imperial budget. 'The result of this has been,' says Zosimus, 'that the Roman Empire, cut short in every direction, has become the home of every barbarous tribe or else has been so utterly wasted of its inhabitants, that men

<sup>1</sup> This inscription is quoted by Seeck (*ubi supra*) from the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi. 1783.

<sup>2</sup> iv. 59.

can no longer recognise the places where its great cities stood.' BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

The poet Prudentius represents the Emperor as delivering to the Senate a long harangue, partaking in some degree of the nature of a sermon, against idolatry<sup>1</sup>. He declaimed against the folly of worshipping senseless and perishable images of stone, of plaster, or of brass, though he uttered a kindly hint to preserve those which were beautiful as works of art, unmutilated but also unstained with sacrificial gore. He reminded the Senate of the cruelties which nearly a century before had been practised by the heathen Maxentius, and of the joy with which their forefathers had hailed the '*In hoc signo vinces*' standard of the Christian liberator Constantine. He exhorted them to leave idolatry to the barbarians, and to cultivate 'that mild and reasonable religion which was worthy of the wise trainer of the nations.'

394-  
Proceed-  
ings in  
Rome as  
described  
by Pru-  
dentius.

According to the Christian poet 'the benches of the full Senate decreed that the couch of Jupiter was infamous, and that all idolatry was to be driven far from the purified City.' There is at first sight some contradiction between this story and that told by Zosimus, but, on examining the two and making allowance for the prejudices of the heathen and the poetical amplification of the Christian, it seems probable that Theodosius did actually make some proposition to the Senate for the discontinuance of the grants hitherto

<sup>1</sup> Contra Symmachum, i. 415-505. I cannot find in these lines the justification for Gibbon's statement, 'In a full meeting of the Senate the Emperor proposed, according to the forms of the republic, the important question whether the worship of Jupiter or that of Christ should be the religion of the Romans' (chap. xxviii. n. 18).

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

394.

made for the great State-sacrifices to Jupiter and the other gods of the Capitol, that in bringing forward this proposal he resorted to some of the usual arguments of Christian controversialists against the folly of idolatry, that this harangue provoked from some brave Senators the declaration that they meant to live and die in the faith of their ancestral gods, but that nevertheless the vote for the discontinuance of the sacrificial grants was carried by a large majority, either Christian at heart or pliant to the will of an omnipotent Emperor<sup>1</sup>.

But more important, probably, than any formal legislative action of the Emperor was the social influence exercised by him as the unquestioned and victorious head of the great official hierarchy of the Empire, upon the office-seeking Senators of Rome. Prudentius declares that six hundred families of ancient lineage, among whom he enumerates the bearers of the following names—Annius, Probus, Anicius, Olybrius, Paulinus, Bassus, and Gracchus—were ‘turned to the ensigns of Christ.’ He does not directly assert that all these conversions were caused by the arguments of Theodosius, and in fact we know that the representatives of some of these families had been Christians for many years previous to 395: but he does convey the idea, and probably with truth, that the overthrow of Eu-

<sup>1</sup> Though reluctant to differ from Tillemont, and (among modern commentators) from Sievers and Gùldenpenning, I cannot see sufficient force in their arguments to outweigh the clear testimony of Zosimus and Prudentius as to the visit of Theodosius to Rome, which was certainly *possible*, between the victory of the Frigidus and his death. S. Lanciani appears to fix at this time the suppression of the order of Vestal Virgins (*Ancient Rome*, p. 175). But this seems to me somewhat premature, as Prudentius, writing his poem *Contra Symmachum* ten years after this date, speaks of the Vestals as a still existing order.

genius and the visit of Theodosius which followed closely upon it were turning-points in the religious history of the Roman Senate, and that the heathen party in that assembly, which had before been either a majority or nearly equal in number to their opponents, now became a hopeless and dwindling minority.

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.  
394.

The new year (395) was marked by a pleasing event hitherto unknown in Roman annals, and that event was commemorated by a poem of Claudian, the first of a long and important series. The Consulship of the year was conferred on two brothers, Probinus and Olybrius, the sons of that successful place-hunter, but most unsuccessful ruler, Petronius Probus, whose oppressions and whose cowardice twenty years before so nearly brought Illyricum to ruin<sup>1</sup>. Probus, who preyed upon the provincials, was himself preyed upon by a swarm of hungry dependents, and it was perhaps from one of these that Claudian, who is bound to flatter when he does not lampoon, derived the following estimate of the generosity of Probus:—

Consulship  
of Probinus  
and Oly-  
brius.

374.

‘Not on his gold was seen the cavern’s stain,  
The darkness hid it not: for heaven’s rain  
Falls not so freely on the thirsting sward,  
As upon countless crowds his wealth was poured<sup>2</sup>.’

Whatever may have been the defects in the character of Probus, he was one of the most powerful nobles of Rome, and it was doubtless a stroke of policy on the part of the Eastern-minded Theodosius to attach him to his party by the magnificent gift of two Consulships for his sons. In the language of poetry this sort of transaction is translated into a dialogue between per-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 218–222, 225–226.

<sup>2</sup> Consulat. Probinii et Olybrii, 42–44.



BOOK I. sonified Rome and the divine Emperor. Claudian  
 CH. 11. represents the goddess of the Seven-hilled City flying  
 395. northward to present her suit to Theodosius immediately after the victory of the Frigidus. She alights among the winding passes of the Alps, those passes impenetrable to all but Theodosius.

Lines 112--  
 123.

‘Hard by, the victor on the turf reclined,  
 The joy of ended battle filled his mind,  
 The glad earth crowned with flowers her master’s rest,  
 And the grass grew, rejoicing to be pressed.  
 Against a tree he leaned: his helm beneath  
 Shone his calm brows, but still his panting breath  
 Came thick and fast, and still the hot sweat poured  
 Down those vast limbs. He lay like battle’s Lord,  
 Great Mars, when, the Gelonian hosts o’erthrown,  
 He upon Gothic Haemus lays him down.  
 Bellona bears his arms; Bellona leads  
 Forth from the yoke his dusty, smoking steeds.  
 Trembles his weary arm. The quivering gleam  
 Of his vast spear falls far o’er Hebrus’ stream.’

Of course the Imperial City’s petition is granted. Proba, the venerable mother of the designated Consuls, prepares for their use the golden-woven *trabeae* (the consular vestments), ‘and shining garments of the tissue which the Chinese shave off from the soft [mulberry] foliage, gathering leafy fleeces from the wool-bearing forest.’ Jupiter thunders his approval, and old father Tiber, startled by the sound, leaves his mossy bed and lays him down on the island opposite to the Aventine to watch, delighted, the loving brothers escorted by the Senate to the Forum, and the double set of *fascēs* borne forth from the same door.

Lines 266--  
 279

‘O Time, well-marked by brother-memories dear  
 And brother-chiefs, O happy, happy year.  
 Let Phoebus now his fourfold toil bestow,  
 Send forth thy Winter first, not white with snow,

Nor numb with cold, nor vexed by tempests wild,  
But tempered by the South-wind's whispers mild.  
Then let sweet Zephyr bring the Spring serene  
And gild with crocuses thy meadows green.  
Let Summer deck thee with her cereal crown,  
And Autumn with full clusters weigh thee down.  
To thee alone is given the boast sublime,  
Peerless in all the chronicles of Time,  
That brothers were thy rulers: all our land  
Shall speak thy praise; the Hours with loving hand  
Shall write in changing flowers thy honoured name,  
And the dim centuries rehearse thy fame.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.

395.

It certainly was a memorable year, the one which was thus pompously saluted, though not precisely for the reasons which made the poet welcome it. The 395th year of the Christian era, the 1148th year from the building of the city, brought with it in its earliest weeks the death of Theodosius, and that death was the beginning of the end of all things.

The disease of which Theodosius died in the prime of life (for he had not attained his fiftieth year) was dropsy, caused, we are told, by the fatigues and anxiety of the war with Eugenius. But he was evidently a somewhat free liver, and his long illness at Thessalonica had probably left him with an impaired constitution. When he felt his health failing he sent for his child-partner Honorius, who was brought by Serena from Constantinople to Milan. He arranged for the division of his Empire, the East to Arcadius, the West to Honorius: he made his will, in which he exhorted his sons to the practice of piety, by which victory would be obtained and peace secured. He also recommended the remission of an unpopular tax which he had himself proposed to abolish, but which had been hitherto maintained by the advice of one of his counsellors,

Death of  
Theo-  
dosius.

BOOK I. probably Rufinus. Having made these dispositions, he  
 CH. 11. calmly awaited the death which the Egyptian hermit  
 395. had foretold. There was, however, a transient return  
 of health, during which he gave orders for the celebra-  
 tion of some chariot-races on the 17th of January in  
 honour of his victory. In the morning he was able to  
 preside in the Hippodrome, but, after he had dined, his  
 malady returned with added violence, and he was forced  
 to send the little Honorius to preside in his stead. On  
 that night he died, having reigned sixteen years all but  
 two days.

Funeral  
rites.

The great Emperor lay in state for forty days. His  
 friend and faithful monitor, Ambrose, delivered an  
 oration over his bier, to which we are indebted for  
 some valuable information as to the character and the  
 last days of Theodosius. In an eloquent apostrophe he  
 pictures the soul of the great Christian Emperor  
 winging its way to the halls of light, and there com-  
 muning with his lost friend and colleague Gratian, as  
 ‘day unto day uttereth speech,’ while in the realms of  
 darkness Eugenius and Arbogast mingle in dreary  
 colloquy ‘as night unto night showeth its unholy  
 knowledge.’ But the oration as a whole strikes a  
 modern reader as stilted and diffuse, and does not seem  
 to come so directly from the speaker’s heart as that in  
 which he mourned the untimely death of Valenti-  
 nian II.

The body of Theodosius was eventually removed to  
 Constantinople and laid in the Church of the Apostles,  
 where the great chest of porphyry in which it was  
 entombed was visible till the Turk entered the city of  
 the Caesars.

Thus ended the career of Theodosius, generally

styled the Great. Did he deserve that title, which he probably received at first from the Catholic party for the services, undoubtedly eminent, which he rendered to their cause? In comparison with the infinite littleness of every Roman Emperor during the succeeding century, he is rightly named; but how as to his own essential greatness? There is a certain magnificence and stateliness about him which would seem to justify posterity in naming him 'the Grand,' but of greatness his prematurely interrupted life makes it difficult to judge. Had his conciliatory policy towards the barbarians saved the Empire (and who can say what thirty years more of that policy under a wise and firm ruler might have effected?) he had been greater than Africanus, greater than Caesar. As it is, his life lies like a ruined sea-wall amidst the fierce barbarian tide, and the ravaged lands beyond it seem to say, but perhaps untruly, 'Thou couldest never have been a barrier to defend us.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 11.  
Character  
of Theo-  
dosius.

To me, earnestly striving to form an impartial estimate of his character, he seems to have been a true Spaniard both in his virtues and his faults. The comparison may seem fanciful, as many other elements have since combined to form the Spanish character; but let it be taken for what it is worth. The hero of those strange encounters with the Barbarians of the Marshes, recalls the figure of his countryman *El Cid Campeador*; the author of the Edict concerning the Catholic faith reminds us of the title of 'His Most Catholic Majesty'; his steady perseverance in the suppression of Heresy is worthy of Philip II; his magnificence suggests the Escorial, his ferocity the bull-fight; his procrastination in his dealings with Maximus

BOOK I. and Arbogast, the phrase 'hasta la mañana<sup>1</sup>'; his  
 CH. II. mismanagement of the finances, the wrongs of the  
 Spanish bondholder.

Here is one estimate of the character of Theodosius. Those who desire a more favourable picture may find it often repeated in the pages of the courtly Claudian. His apotheosis of the Emperor is painted with such strength of colour that the very extravagance of the flattery makes it almost sublime. He represents the dying Theodosius adjuring Stilicho, by the ties of gratitude and kindred, to be a faithful guardian to his sons. Then—

'He ceased, nor longer on the earth might stay,  
 But through the clouds he clove his radiant way.  
 He enters Luna's sphere; he leaves behind  
 Arcadian Mercury's threshold. Soon the wind—  
 The gentle wind of Venus—fans his face,  
 And thence he seeks the Sun's bright dwelling-place<sup>2</sup>.  
 The sullen flame of Mars and placid Jove  
 He passes next, and now stands high above,  
 Where at the summit of the spheres is spread  
 The zone made hard by Saturn's chilly tread.  
 The frame of Heaven is loosed, the gleaming gates  
 Stand open: for this guest Boötes waits  
 Within his northern home; and southward far  
 Hunter Orion greets the stranger Star.  
 Each courts his friendship: each alternate prays  
 That in his sky the new-lit fire may blaze.

Oh glory, once of Earth, and now of Air,  
 Wearied, thou still dost to thy home repair,  
 For Spain first bore thee on her noble breast,  
 And in Spain's ocean dost thou sink to rest.

<sup>1</sup> 'Till to-morrow.'

<sup>2</sup> Of course, as the astronomy is Ptolemaic, the Sun takes the place between Venus and Mars which Copernicus has taught us to assign to the Earth.



At thy proud rising, oh exultant sire,  
Thou seest Arcadius: when thy coursers tire,  
The loved Honorius stays thy westering fire,  
And wheresoe'er through heaven thine orbit runs,  
Thou seest the world-wide kingdom of thy sons:  
Thy sons, whose wise serenity of soul  
And patient cares the conquered tribes control.'

The Roman Empire certainly held out splendid possibilities to ambition. Never since its fall has a mere Spanish gentleman of respectable birth and talents been turned into a star<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [I leave my final estimate of the character of Theodosius as it was written fifteen years ago. Closer study of the subject makes me doubtful whether I did not, under the influence of the criticisms of Eunapius and Zosimus, judge that Emperor somewhat too harshly; and yet I cannot put my finger on any line in the portrait which is wrongly drawn. But in this case, as in so many others, added knowledge does not make it easier to reduce a complicated group of phenomena to one simple formula, either of praise or blame, and I therefore do not attempt to re-write my former description. I may say, however, that fitful energy seems to me to be the special note of the character of Theodosius. He does not appear to have been either a patient or an industrious ruler, but he evidently produced a powerful impression on those with whom he came in contact, and when these were not trembling before his paroxysms of rage, I can well believe that they loved him.]

## NOTE F. ON THE DEATH OF VALENTINIAN II.

NOTE F. WHILE agreeing with the general verdict of historians that the death of Valentinian II was probably a murder, I do not think that the hypothesis of suicide is altogether excluded by the evidence.

1. Our best witness is Epiphanius (Bishop of Salamis, died 403), who in his treatise 'On Weights and Measures' says: 'Forty-six years are numbered from the death of Constantine to the consulship of Arcadius (for the second time) and Rufinus, under whom died Valentinian the younger, son of the great Valentinian, being found suddenly suffocated in the palace—so it is said<sup>1</sup>—on the Ides [15th] of May, a day before Pentecost, on the Sabbath-day; and on the very day of Pentecost he was carried forth, seventeen days before the Kalends of June [16th May].' This fixes the date accurately, and is an absolutely contemporary notice of the event, though not penned by one who was near to the scene of Valentinian's death.

2. Orosius, who wrote in Spain, in the year 418, says: 'Valentinian the younger, being restored to his kingdom, passed over into Gaul, where, while he was living in peace, the commonwealth being tranquil, he was (as they say) strangled by the craft of his Count, Arbogast, and hung by a rope that he might be thought to have contrived his own death.'

3. St. Augustine, in his *De Civitate Dei* (v. 26), written between 413 and 426, uses this very guarded phrase: 'Valentinian having soon after perished, whether by treachery or in some other way or chance' ('*eoque sive per insidias, sive quo alio pacto vel casu proxime extincto*').

4. Prosper, who lived in the south of Gaul, and is therefore a better witness than some others, and who probably wrote this

<sup>1</sup> Εὐρεθεὶς ἄφνω ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ πεπνιγμένος (ὡς λόγος).

part of his chronicle about 433, says: 'Valentinian being driven to weariness of life by the too great severity of Arbogast, the master of the soldiery, perished by a rope at Vienne.' ('Val. ad vitae fastidium nimia Arbogastis magistri militum austeritate perductus laqueo apud Viennam periit.') As if to emphasize his belief in the innocence of Arbogast, Prosper continues: 'Arbogastes... mortuo Valentiniano, *cujus exitu gravabatur*, Eugenium in Galliis imperare facit.' But one of the MSS. reads '*exercitu*,' which, if intelligible at all, puts a different meaning into the sentence.

These are our best contemporary witnesses, and they show that the death of the young Emperor was apparently wrought by his own hands, and that there were some who continued to believe that it had really been so wrought; but that, considering the character and relations of the actors in the tragedy, murder instigated by Arbogast was the more generally accepted hypothesis. Other historians have added some details which are inconsistent with the notice in Epiphanius, and which I think we may pronounce to be certainly false.

Thus Philostorgius (writing probably about 430, but known to us only through the abstract of Photius) says that 'one day at Vienne after dinner, Arbogast, seeing Valentinian with some low buffoons lying down and dipping his lips into the river, sent some of his attendants to attack him. These laid violent hands upon him, and savagely strangled him in the absence of his servants, who had gone to take their dinner. To avoid enquiry for the authors of the deed they tied his handkerchief like a noose round his neck and hung him up with it to a tree that he might seem to have voluntarily hung himself.'

Zosimus (writing perhaps about a generation later than Philostorgius) says that 'Arbogast fell upon Valentinian while he was engaged in games outside the walls of Vienne with certain of the soldiers, and not suspecting any such design, and striking him a fatal blow, thus destroyed him.' Neither of these accounts fits with the absolutely contemporary testimony of Epiphanius, 'he was suddenly suffocated *in the palace*.'

Of the two great ecclesiastical historians, Socrates (circa 440) says unhesitatingly that Arbogast and Eugenius 'agreed to murder the Emperor Valentinian, and having corrupted the eunuchs of the Imperial bed-chamber by the most tempting

NOTE F. promises of promotion, induced them to strangle the Emperor in his sleep.' On the other hand, his contemporary and rival, Sozomen, says that some relate that he was put to death by the eunuchs at the solicitation of Arbogast and an opposition party of courtiers, and others that he wrought the fatal deed with his own hands because he was hindered by those about him from obeying the impetuous passions of youth and acting according to his own caprice.

Thus it is clear that the opinions of men were long divided as to the real nature of the tragedy at Vienne. If we enquire as to the circumstantial evidence, we shall find that also to be in a wavering balance, though on the whole the scale of murder preponderates. Arbogast had much to fear from the prolongation of his master's life, and something to hope from his death. Valentinian appears to have feared danger to his life, and to have besought for this reason the intervention first of Theodosius and then of Ambrose. He had also, with the religious notions of the age, great reason for desiring not to die unbaptized.

On the other hand, Arbogast does not appear to have had his plans in readiness for the decease of Valentinian, since an interval of three months elapses before the elevation of Eugenius to the throne. The ungovernable rages of Valentinian the father seem to point to the existence of a strain of madness in his nature which may have been transmitted to his son; the feverish anxiety for the arrival of Ambrose, long before it was possible for the *Silentiarius* to have reached Milan, looks like a disordered intellect, and according to the story of Philostorgius, Valentinian did talk about suicide when he was prevented by his attendants from rushing upon Arbogast. Also, as Arbogast's was eventually the unsuccessful cause, and Valentinian's niece ruled the empire for a generation, we are likely to hear that version of the story which is most unfavourable to the general and most favourable to the Emperor.

It may excite surprise that in my enumeration of authorities I have not included the great sermon of Ambrose, 'De Obitu Valentiniani.' Having read this sermon carefully through with an especial view to the solution of this question, I cannot extract from it any decided utterance on either side. Much of what the Bishop says would have been suitable to a natural but premature

death. There are certainly two or three expressions which harmonise with the theory of murder, but they are almost always balanced by a sentence which suggests the thought of suicide. Upon the whole the sermon leaves upon my mind the impression that Ambrose was in the same state of suspended judgment which Sozomen describes, suspecting, but not fully convinced, that his young disciple had fallen by the hands of assassins.

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NOTE F.



## CHAPTER XII.

### INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE EMPIRE.

#### Authorities.

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

#### *Sources :—*

The CODEX THEODOSIANUS, to which occasional reference is made in these volumes, is too well known to require detailed description. Published in the year 438 by order of Theodosius II, the grandson of Theodosius the Great, and codifying the legislation of 127 years (312-438), it is the great quarry from which enquirers into the social and political condition of Rome under the Christian Emperors will always draw their materials. I quote from Ritter's edition with Gothofred's notes, Leipzig, 1736-1743; but I have also used the admirable edition of Haenel (1842), which contains a more complete text than was available in Ritter's day.

The NOTITIA DIGNITATUM, notwithstanding the use made of it by Gibbon and Guizot, is still scarcely as common a book in the library of the historical student as it deserves to be. Its full title is 'Notitia dignitatum omnium, tam civilium quam militarium in partibus Orientis et Occidentis.' From the time of Augustus downwards 'Breviaries' of the Empire somewhat similar in form to this had been often compiled, sometimes by the Emperor's own hand; but there can be little doubt that the Notitia as we know it, was put together in the first years of the fifth century, probably about the time of Alaric's first invasion of Italy. It is a complete Official Directory and Army List of the whole Roman Empire, and is of incalculable value for the decision of all sorts of questions, antiquarian and historical. For instance, the whole theory of the identification of the existing ruins with

the former stations along the line of Hadrian's British Wall depends entirely on the mention in the *Notitia* of the names of the cohorts posted at those stations. BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

The *Notitia* devotes forty-five chapters to the Eastern and forty-five to the Western Empire. The different classes of civil and military officers are enumerated according to their rank. Nearly every chapter begins thus—'Sub dispositione viri illustris [*or spectabilis*],' and then follow the names of his subordinates. At the end of the chapter is a description of his 'officium,' that is, of the various classes of persons who form his official retinue, notaries, secretaries, registrars, and the like.

Most of the chapters are headed with curious pictures of the 'Insignia' of the person whose office they describe: shields of the legions for a general officer, a carriage and four horses for the highly honoured Praefectus Praetorio, maidens with melancholy countenances bearing the produce of their respective lands to signify the different countries under the Prefect's rule, fortresses for the general on a hostile frontier, purses bursting with gold for the minister of finance, and so forth. These pictures can be clearly traced up to a MS. (now lost) of the eleventh century, and probably in the main they are accurate copies of those which adorned the *Notitia* when its leaves were turned over by Arcadius and Honorius.

It is remarked however (by Böcking) that while the pictures of the maidens, the chariots and so forth, have in general a 'Byzantine' character, those of the cities with their steep, red-tiled roofs show a mediaeval and Teutonic influence. A curious story is told<sup>1</sup> of the Codex of the *Notitia* now in the Royal Library at Munich. It seems that the ecclesiastic of Spires, who was copying this MS. for Otho Henry, Count Palatine, made some changes in the pictures, but the Count was so offended at these alterations that a fresh copy was made accurately representing the original. The double set of pictures is still attached to the Munich Codex. The story is creditable to the archaeological discernment of the German Prince, but illustrates the kind of liberty which the mediaeval scribes considered themselves entitled to use.

The literary history of the *Notitia Dignitatum* is curious but tantalising. The chief MSS. now in existence appear to be

<sup>1</sup> By Seeck, on the first page of his 'Praefatio.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

transcripts of a very fine Codex written about the tenth century, which till the middle of the sixteenth century was still in existence in a library (I presume the library of a monastery) at Spires. From this Codex we know that a copy was made by order of Pietro Donato, Bishop of Padua, in the month of January, 1436. The Spires MS. has unfortunately disappeared. All the searches which have been made for it, at Spires and elsewhere, have proved quite fruitless, and scholars have come reluctantly to the conclusion 'that very little hope still remains that it can have escaped a cruel Fate, executing her decrees by the knife of the book-binder or the contents of the glue-pot<sup>1</sup>.' Four good copies, however, of the Spires MS. fortunately exist, and the most interesting of these is the 'Codex Venetianus,' which Böcking, the chief authority on the subject, pronounces to be the same which was made, as above stated, for the Bishop of Padua during his presidency of the Council of Basle. During the troubles of the French Revolution this MS. was transported to England, and Dr. Böcking, writing in the year 1834, says with comical despair, 'The MS. lately in the library of St. Mark's at Venice is now an exile in the book-cases of England' ('in Anglicis pluteis exulat'), and again, 'In what corner of that great chaos of MSS. and books called England this Codex may now be lying, I cannot conjecture.' All the time it was safely housed and duly catalogued in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It is one of the 'Canonici' collection, is now quoted as 'Oxoniensis Canonicianus,' and its reference in the catalogue is Canon. Misc. 378.

The edition of the *Notitia* from which Gibbon worked and which was a book of great repute in its day, is that of Guido Panciroli of Padua (Venice, 1593, 1602; Lyons, 1608; Geneva, 1623). Panciroli's work, however, was rendered quite obsolete by that of the above-mentioned Dr. Böcking (Bonn, 1839-1853). This edition has 1700 pages of notes and an elaborate index: but it again is superseded, as far as the text is concerned, by the very complete and critical edition of Otto Seeck (Berlin, 1876) who has caused the Oxford MS. to be properly collated, and has now given us what may be considered an authoritative text.

For notes, however, we are still dependent on the very learned but somewhat cumbrous and not always helpful commentary of Böcking. A great service would be rendered to historical science

<sup>1</sup> Böcking, *Ueber die Notitia*, &c., p. 5.

by any scholar who should furnish us with a clear and concise commentary on Seeck's text of the *Notitia*, embodying the results of the most recent investigations into the administrative system of the Empire. BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

*Guides :—*

Bethmann-Hollweg's 'Gerichtsverfassung und Prozess des sinkenden römischen Reichs' (Bonn, 1834).

For further information as to some of the subordinate members of the official hierarchy than I am able to insert here, I may refer to the Introduction to my 'Letters of Cassiodorus' (London, 1886) and to an article on 'Law reform in the time of Justinian' (chiefly founded on the 'De Dignitatibus' of Joannes Lydus), contributed by me to the *Contemporary Review*, May, 1881).

THE death of Theodosius was the prelude to momentous changes in the whole Roman world. Before proceeding to describe them, it will be convenient to give some faint outline of the internal organisation of the Empire during the fourth century. Fragmentary and imperfect the sketch must necessarily be. Materials for it are scanty; but the attempt must be made, though the result may be a confession of ignorance on many points rather than a series of defined and well-rounded statements such as readers naturally prefer. Difficulty  
of the  
subject.

The Emperor, that still majestic figure who stood at the head of the Roman state, how shall we think of him? The old idea that he was merely the most influential of Roman citizens, that idea which Augustus and even Tiberius strove to preserve, must be considered as quite obsolete since the changes introduced by Diocletian and Constantine. All the Greek half of the Empire calls him without compunction *BASILEUS* (King), and no Roman, though he may not use the actual word *REX* in speaking of him, can still cheat himself with the thought that the Imperator is one Undis-  
guised Ab-  
solutism of  
the later  
Emperors.



BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

whit less of an absolute sovereign than Tullus or Tarquin. Few things impress one with a more vivid conception of his power than the matter-of-fact way in which a historian like Zosimus speaks of the imperial dignity as 'the Lordship of the Universe' (ἡ τῶν ὅλων ἀρχή). In the Directory of the Empire, the Chamberlain, the Almoner, the Marshal, are described as having charge of 'the Sacred Cubicle,' 'the Sacred Charities,' and 'the Sacred Palace'. The characters which the Imperial hand deigns to trace in purple ink upon the parchment scroll are 'the Sacred Letters.' When the august scribe wishes to describe his own personality he speaks with charming modesty of 'Our Clemency' or 'My Eternity'. Nay, in some place he speaks of his own presents to his courtiers as gifts 'from heaven'.

Apotheosis  
of the  
Emperors,  
how re-  
garded by  
themselves,

If it were possible to penetrate into the secret thoughts of those long-vanished wearers of the purple, one would eagerly desire to know under what aspect the imperial deification presented itself to their minds. Many a one had watched the failing intellect and the increasing bodily infirmities of the preceding Emperor. In some instances a timely dose of poison, or a judicious arrangement of the bed-clothes over his mouth, had hastened his departure from a world in which his presence was no longer convenient; yet in the very first

<sup>1</sup> Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi, Comes Sacrarum Largitionum, Castrens Sacri Palatii.

<sup>2</sup> Codex Theodosianus, lib. xiv. tit. 17, 14; lib. xii. tit. 1, 160.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, in Cod. Theod. vi. 30. 23, the Count of Sacred Largesses is ordered by Theodosius II. to bestow certain *solatia* on his retired subordinates, 'ex his videlicet quae suae jurisdictionis esse, nec aliis ex consuetudine *coelitus* deputata cognoverit.' 'Coelitus, id est ab Imperatore seu Principe' is the remark of the commentator.



proclamation of the new ruler to the soldiery he would speak of his predecessor as 'God Augustus,' or 'God Tiberius,' 'God Claudius,' or 'God Commodus,' and the court poets would, as we have seen, describe in unflinching phrase his translation to the spheres. The homely common sense of *Vespasian* seems to have perceived the humour of the thing. At the first onset of his disease he said, 'If I am not mistaken I am in the way to become a God<sup>1</sup>.' But *Caligula* accepted his divinity much more seriously. He averred that the goddess *Luna* visited him nightly in bodily shape, and he called upon his courtier *Vitellius* (the same who was afterwards Emperor) to vouch for the fact. *Vitellius*, with his eyes bent towards the ground, with folded hands, in a thin and trembling voice, replied, 'My lord, you gods alone are privileged to look upon the faces of your fellow-deities.' And *Caligula* evidently received the answer as a matter of course, and not a smile probably crossed the faces of the bystanders—for to smile at *Caligula's* godhead would have been to die<sup>2</sup>.

But it may be said that no fair argument can be drawn from the case of a confessed madman like *Caligula*. Let us hear then how *Theodosius*, the statesman, the Christian, the sound theologian, permitted himself to be addressed in the *Panegyric of Pacatus*. The latter is praising him<sup>3</sup> for the accuracy with which he always discharges his promises of future favour to his courtiers. 'Do you think, O Emperor, that I wish to praise only your generosity? No, I marvel also at

<sup>1</sup> 'Primâ quoque morbi accessione, "ut" (inquit) "puto, deus fio."' Sueton. *Vita Vespasiani*, xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lib. lix. c. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Sect. 18.

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

your memory. For which of the great men of old, Hortensius, Lucullus, or Caesar, had so ready a power of recollection as *that sacred mind of yours*, which gives up everything that has been entrusted to it at the very place and time which you have ordered beforehand? Is it that you remind yourself? or, as the Fates are said to assist with their tablets *that God who is the partner in your majesty*, so does some divine power serve your bidding, which writes down and in due time suggests to your memory the promises which you have made?' Such a sentence, gravely premeditated and uttered without reproof in the presence of Theodosius, is surely not less extraordinary than the impromptu answer of Vitellius.

Mode of  
election  
of the  
Emperor.

How was this omnipotent Emperor, this God upon earth, selected from the crowd of ordinary mortals around him? Hereditary descent was not the title, though we have already met with many instances in which it asserted itself. The Empire never, at any rate during the period with which we are concerned, lost its strictly elective character. Who then were the electors? Imagine the endless discussions on this point which would take place in any modern European state, the elaborate machinery by which in Venice, in Germany, in the United States, even in Poland, the election of the Chief of the Executive has been accomplished. Of all this there is not a trace in the Roman Empire. In old days, when the Republic was still standing, the army, after an especially brilliant victory, gathered around the praetor or proconsul who commanded them, and with shouts of triumph, while they clashed their spears upon their shields, saluted him *Imperator*. That tumultuary proceeding seems to have

been the type of every election of a Roman Emperor. The successor might have been absolutely fixed upon beforehand, as in the case of Tiberius; he might follow in the strict line of hereditary descent as Titus followed Vespasian and Domitian Titus; the choice might even have been, as in the case of the Emperor Tacitus, formally conceded by the soldiery to the senate; but in any case the presentation of the new sovereign to the legions, and their acclamation welcoming him as Imperator, seems to have been the decisive moment of the commencement of his reign.

This fact explains the anxiety of every Emperor who had a son, to have him associated with himself in his own lifetime. By presenting that son to the legions, as Valentinian presented Gratian at Amiens to the army of Gaul, this delicate and critical event of the acclamation was accomplished, while he still had all his father's influence at his back, and as he was an Augustus already, his reign might, if all went well and no rival claimant to the favour of the legions arose, be quietly prolonged without any solution of continuity at his father's death.

In a great number of cases such an attempt to settle the succession beforehand, whether in favour of a real or adopted son, was successful. In many, as we all know, it failed, some other legions, often in a distant part of the Empire, having, when the news of the death of the old Emperor arrived, acclaimed their favourite officer as Imperator, arrayed him with the purple, and eventually carried him, shoulder-high, into the chambers of the Palatine. This, it may be said, was mutiny and insurrection, but when one considers the essentially unconstitutional and tumultuary character of the election of every Emperor, one is almost ready to say that in this case at least

BOOK I. success was the only test of legality. The lawful Emperor was the man who either succeeded to the throne without opposition, or who made good his pretensions by the sword. The usurper was a general who having been 'acclaimed' by the troops was afterwards defeated in battle.

Parallel  
between  
the Im-  
perial Ac-  
clamation  
and the  
Papal Ado-  
ration.

A parallel might possibly be drawn between the election of a Roman Emperor and that of his yet mightier successor, the Roman Pontiff. It is well known to how fluctuating and ill-defined an electorate the choice of a new bishop of Rome was entrusted until, in the eleventh century, it was transferred to the College of Cardinals. And although the lengthy deliberations of the old men who are now immured in the Vatican during a Papal Interregnum might seem as little as possible to resemble the cheers uttered by the rough voices of the Roman legionaries, there is still among their traditions the possibility of electing a Pope by 'adoration,' a rapid and summary process, with no set speeches or counting of votes, which may possibly have been suggested by the remembrance of the equally impulsive movement whereby, in theory at least, the Roman army chose its Emperor.

The  
Roman  
nobility  
official, not  
hereditary.

The brothers, sisters, and children of the Emperor bore the title of *Nobilissimus*, and naturally took precedence of the rest of the brilliant official hierarchy which surrounded his throne. Of the ordinary members of this hierarchy it is usual to speak as Nobles, and there does not seem any reason for departing from the customary practice if it is clearly understood by the reader that hereditary dignity, or in the strict sense of the term 'noble blood,' did not form part of the idea of an aristocracy in Imperial Rome. Office ennobled the actual



holder. No doubt the son of a Prefect had a greater chance of attaining to office than the son of a shop-keeper. In right of this chance he enjoyed a certain social pre-eminence, but he had no claim by inheritance to a seat in the Senate, or to any other share in the government of the State. In thinking of the aristocracy of the Empire we must entirely unfeudalise our minds. The Mandarins of China or the Pachas of Turkey furnish probably safer analogies than any which could be drawn from our own hereditary House of Peers.

Of the many grades into which this official hierarchy was divided, three only need here attract our attention :

1. The *Illustres*.
2. The *Spectabiles*.
3. The *Clarissimi*<sup>1</sup>.

Our own titles of distinction are for the most part so interwoven with ideas drawn from hereditary descent that it is impossible to find any precise equivalents to these designations. 'His Grace the Duke,' 'The Most Noble the Marquis,' are obviously inappropriate. But as extremely rough approximations to the true idea, the reader may perhaps be safe in accepting the following equations :

*Illustris* = The Right Honourable.

*Spectabilis* = The Honourable.

*Clarissimus* = The Worshipful.

If we describe the functions of the different classes we shall get a little nearer to a true analogy, but parliamentary institutions and local self-government will

<sup>1</sup> The fourth and fifth classes were named *Perfectissimi* and *Egregii* respectively.



BOOK I. still prevent that analogy from being exact. With  
CH. 12. these limitations we may say that

The Cabinet Ministers . . .	= the Illustres.
Heads of Department, Lords Lieutenant of Counties, Ge- nerals and Admirals	} = the Spectabiles.
The Governors of our smaller Colonies, Colonels and Cap- tains in the Navy	
	} = the Clarissimi.

The Illustres, who alone need be described with any detail, were twenty-eight in number, thirteen for the West and fifteen for the East. The only difference worth noticing is that there were five *Magistri Militum* for the East as compared to three in the West.

For the sake of clearness we will confine our attention to the thirteen Cabinet Ministers of the West, who may be classified thus :—

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND JUSTICE.	ARMY.	HOUSEHOLD.
<i>Praefectus Praetorio Italiae.</i>	<i>Magister Peditum in Praesenti.</i>	<i>Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi.</i>
<i>Praefectus Praetorio Galliarum.</i>	<i>Magister Equitum in Praesenti.</i>	<i>Comes Rerum Privatarum.</i>
<i>Praefectus Urbis Romae.</i>	<i>Magister Equitum per Gallias.</i>	<i>Comes Domesticorum Equitum.</i>
<i>Magister Officiorum.</i>		<i>Comes Domesticorum Peditum.</i>
<i>Quaestor.</i>		
<i>Comes Sacrarum Largitionum.</i>		

*Praetorian  
Prefect.*

1. In each of the four great compartments into which Diocletian had divided the Roman world, the *Praefectus Praetorio* was the greatest man after the Emperor. He wore a woollen cloak dyed with the purple of Cos and differing from the Emperor's only in

length, reaching not to the feet but to the knees. To him most of the laws were addressed, and he was charged to see to their execution. He held in his hand the whole network of provincial administration, and was the ultimate referee, under the Emperor, in all cases of dispute between province and province, or municipality and municipality. In all the processes of civil and criminal law his was (still under the Emperor) the final court of appeal. The idea of his office seems to have been that as the Emperor was the head, so he was the hand to execute what the head had decreed. What Joseph was to Pharaoh when the Lord of Egypt said to him 'Only in the throne will I be greater than thou'<sup>1</sup>; what the Grand Vizier is now to the Sultan of the Ottomans; that, substantially, the Praetorian Prefect was to the Augustus. The nearest approach which, under our own political system, we can make to a counterpart of his office, is to call him a Prime Minister *plus* a Supreme Court of Appeal.

The history of his title is a curious one. In the very early days of Rome, before even Consuls had a being, the two chief magistrates of the Republic bore the title of Praetors. Some remembrance of this fact lingering in the speech of the people gave always to the term Praetorium (the Praetor's house) a peculiar majesty, and caused it to be used as the equivalent of palace. So in the familiar passages of the New Testament, the palace of Pilate the Governor at Jerusalem, of Herod the King at Caesarea, of Nero the Emperor at Rome, are all called the Praetorium<sup>2</sup>. From the palace the troops who surrounded the person of the

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xli. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Τὸ Πραιτώριον: Mark xv. 16; Acts xxiii. 35; Philippians i. 13.

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

Emperor took their well-known name 'the Praetorian Guard.' Under Augustus the cohorts composing this force, and amounting apparently to 9,000 or 10,000 men, were scattered over various positions in the city of Rome. In the reign of Tiberius, on pretence of keeping them under stricter discipline, they were collected into one camp on the north-east of the city. The author of this change was the notorious Sejanus, our first and most conspicuous example of a Prefect of the Praetorians<sup>1</sup> who made himself all-powerful in the state. The fall of Sejanus did not bring with it any great diminution of the power of the new functionary. As the Praetorians were the frequent, almost the recognised, creators of a new Emperor, it was natural that their commanding officer should be a leading personage in the state, as natural (if another English analogy may be allowed) as that the Leader of the House of Commons should be the First Minister of the Crown. Still, it is strange to find the Praetorian Prefect becoming more and more the ultimate judge of appeal in all civil and criminal cases, and his office held in the golden age of the Empire, the second century, by the most eminent lawyers of the day.

His office  
made by  
Constantine a  
purely  
civil one

This part of his functions survived. When Constantine at length abated the long-standing nuisance of the Praetorian Guards—setting an example which was unconsciously followed by another ruler of Constantinople, Sultan Mahmoud, in his suppression of the Janisseries—he preserved the Praetorian Prefect, and, as we have already seen, gave him a position of pre-eminent dignity in the civil and judicial administration of the

<sup>1</sup> By usage, if not of strict right, this sense, as well as that of Prefect of the Palace, seems to inhere in the title *Praefectus Praetorio*.

Empire. But of military functions he was now entirely deprived, and thus this officer, who had risen into importance in the state solely as the most conspicuous Guardsman about the court, was now permitted to do almost anything that he pleased in the Empire so long as he in no way meddled with the army.

This strong line of demarcation drawn between civil and military functions was one of the most important features of the change in the government introduced by Diocletian and Constantine. It was a change alien to the spirit of the old Roman Republic, whose generals were all judges and revenue-officers as well as soldiers; but it consolidated for a time the fabric even of the Western Empire, and it created that wonderful bureaucratic machine which, more than any other single cause, prolonged for ten centuries the existence of the Empire at Byzantium.

On the important question how long the Praefectus Praetorio continued in office there is an inexplicable silence among most ancient and modern authorities; but the following statement made by a learned and laborious German legist<sup>1</sup> may probably be relied upon with safety. 'With reference to the tenure of office [of all the imperial functionaries] Augustus's plan of continuing them in power for an indefinite series of years had [in the fourth century] been abandoned, and a return had been made to the fundamental principle of the Republic that all offices were annual in their duration; an arrangement by which the cause of good administration was not benefited, but which served to break the power of the provincial governors. The prolongation of the term of office depended entirely

BOOK 1.  
CH. 12.  
Its duration.

<sup>1</sup> Bethmann-Hollweg, i. p. 57.



BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

on the favour of the Emperor. *Only the Praetorian Prefects were nominated for an indefinite time, albeit they seldom maintained themselves in power longer than one year*<sup>1</sup>.

Prefect of  
the City.

2. *Praefectus Urbis*. The Prefects of the two great capitals of the Empire seem to have been theoretically the equals in rank of the Praetorian Prefects, and though their power extended over a more circumscribed area, the splendour of their office was quite as great. When the Prefect of Rome drove through the streets of the city he was drawn by four horses richly adorned with silver trappings and harnessed to the stately *carpentum*. This degree of state was apparently permitted to no other official save only to the Praetorian Prefects. Girt with a sword, he took his seat as President of the Senate. On the assembling of that august body, the chiefs of the army were expected to fall prostrate before the Prefect, who raised them and kissed each in turn, to show forth his desire to be on good terms with the army. Even the Emperor himself used to walk on foot from his palace to meet the Prefect as he moved slowly towards him at the head of the Senate. The police of Rome, the anxious task of the gratuitous distribution of corn among the poorer inhabitants<sup>2</sup>, the aqueducts, the baths, the objects of art in the streets and squares of the city, were all under his general supervision, though each department had a subordinate Prefect, a Count or a Curator as its

<sup>1</sup> A list carefully prepared by Otto Seeck (*Hermes*, xviii. 289-302) gives us nineteen Prefects of the City in twenty years and five months.

<sup>2</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (xix. 10. 1) describes in forcible language the woes of a *Praefectus Urbis* in a time of scarcity.



own especial head. The Prefect of Rome had also civil and criminal jurisdiction extending, in the time of Augustus, over the city itself and an area of a hundred miles' radius round it, and at a later period over a much wider territory. As the especial champion of the privileges of the Senate he was the judge in all cases where the life or property of a senator was at stake. All lawsuits also and prosecutions arising out of the relation of master and slave, patron and freedman, father and son, and thus involving that peculiar sentiment which the Romans called *pietas* (dutiful affection), came by a curious prerogative before the Praefectus Urbis. At a later period of this history we shall make acquaintance with a man<sup>1</sup> holding this exalted position, and shall learn from his private correspondence some of its glories and anxieties.

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

3. *Magister Officiorum*. Thus far we have been concerned with the government of separate portions of the Empire, for both the Praetorian Prefect and the Praefectus Urbis were somewhat like what we should call Lords Lieutenant. Now we come to the central authority, the staff officers, so to speak, of the civil administration. The chief of these was the *Master of the Offices*<sup>2</sup>. He was supreme in the audience-chamber of the sovereign. All despatches from subordinate governors passed through his hands, all embassies from foreign powers were introduced by him. The secretaries of the Imperial cabinet<sup>3</sup>, the guards in immediate

Master of  
the Offices.

<sup>1</sup> Apollinaris Sidonius. See Book III.

<sup>2</sup> It is amusing to see the name of this Roman officer written in Greek characters: ἡγεμόνα τῶν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τάξεων . . . μάγιστρον τοῦτον ὀφφικίων καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι (Zosimus, ii. 25).

<sup>3</sup> The 'agentes in rebus.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

attendance on the Imperial person, were amenable to his authority. The elaborate and expensive service of the public posts, and, by a less intelligible combination of duties, the great armour-manufactories and arsenals of the Empire, were under his oversight<sup>1</sup>. He was thus a great officer of the household, but he was also chief of the *Scrinia*, the four great Imperial cabinets<sup>2</sup>, and it is easy to see how enormous an influence he could exercise, especially under an indolent sovereign, over the conduct both of foreign and domestic affairs. Our constitutional system offers no precise analogy to his position, but if we imagine the offices of the various principal Secretaries of State again held, as in the days of the Tudors, by one man, and that man also discharging the important though little noticed duties of Private Secretary to the Queen, we shall not perhaps be very far from an adequate idea of the functions of the Illustrious Master of the Offices. It should be observed that there was an intense and unslumbering jealousy between the officials employed under the Praetorian Prefect and those who served the Master of the Offices. The former accused the latter, apparently with truth, of perpetually encroaching on their province and usurping their functions.

Quaestor.

4. The *Quaestor* had the care of preparing the Imperial speeches, and was responsible for the language of the laws. He would probably be generally a professed rhetorician, or at any rate a man of some note in

<sup>1</sup> These manufactories in Italy were as follows:—(1) of arrows at Concordia (between Venice and Udine); (2, 3) of shields at Verona and Cremona; (4) of breast-plates at Mantua; (5) of bows at Ticinum (*Pavia*); (6) of broadswords at Lucca.

<sup>2</sup> These four *Scrinia* were the *Scrinium Memoriae*, *Scrinium Dispositionum*, *Scrinium Epistolarum*, and *Scrinium Libellorum*.

the world of letters. His office is not unlike that of the Chancellor of a mediaeval monarch.

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

5. *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*. The Count who had charge of the Sacred (i.e. Imperial) Bounty, should have been by his title simply the Grand Almoner of the Empire, and thus would seem to require a place among the officers of the household. In practice, however, the minister who took charge of the Imperial largesses had to find ways and means for every other form of Imperial expenditure; and now that the Emperor had become the State, and the Privy Purse (*Fiscus*) had practically become synonymous with the National Treasury (*Aerarium*)<sup>1</sup>, the House Steward of the Sovereign was the Finance Minister of the State. The Count of the Sacred Largesses was therefore in fact the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Empire. To him all the collectors of taxes in the smaller divisions of the realm (*comites largitionum per omnes dioeceses*) were subordinate. The mines, the mints, the linen factories, the purple-dye houses, were under his control. And as some part of the Imperial revenue was drawn from duties on the transport of goods by sea, the Count of the Sacred Largesses was supposed to have a general superintendence of private commerce—though

<sup>1</sup> In the earlier periods of the Empire this distinction between the *Fiscus* and the *Aerarium*, as is well known, had been diligently maintained. Augustus, in the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, takes credit to himself for having four times assisted the public treasury out of his own property (the *Aerarium* out of the *Fiscus*) by contributions amounting in all to 105,000,000 sesterces, or nearly one million sterling. But at that time the Emperor was still in theory little more than a private individual benevolently assisting in the administration of the state. By the third century, at any rate, this distinction between his purse and the state purse, the *Fiscus* and the *Aerarium*, seems to have vanished.

BOOK I. more, it must be feared, with a view to fleece than to  
 CH. 12. foster it.

Masters of  
 Horse and  
 Foot.

6, 7, 8. *Magister Peditum in Praesenti* (or *Praesentalis*); *Magister Equitum* ditto; *Magister Equitum per Gallias*. When Constantine deprived the Praetorian Prefect of his military command, and made him the first civil minister of the state, he lodged the leadership of the troops in the hands of a new officer to whom he gave the title of Master. Still bent on prosecuting to the utmost his policy of division of powers, he gave to one officer the command of the infantry—always far the most important portion of a Roman army—with the title of *Magister Peditum*; to another the command of the cavalry with the title *Magister Equitum*. It is possible that in these arrangements there was a retrospective glance to the earliest days of the Republic, when the appointment of a Dictator, that absolute lord of the legions, was always accompanied by the appointment of a Master of the Horse. But whatever the constitutional warrant for the practice, it seems difficult to suppose that such a division in the supreme command could have worked successfully. And in fact we often find, in the period that we are now considering, the two offices united under the title *Magister utriusque Militiae* (Master of both kinds of soldiery).

Under the sons of Constantine the number of these commanders-in-chief was increased, and under Theodosius it was increased again, partly in order to meet the stress of barbarian warfare on the frontiers, partly in order that the pride or jealousy of each Emperor might be flattered or soothed by having his own *Magister* in attendance at his court. But in the East and West the Master of the Foot or Horse, who com-



manded the troops nearest to the Imperial residence, was called 'the Master in the Presence' (*in Praesenti* or *Praesentalis*); thus with bated breath, in Latin which would have been unintelligible to Cicero, were courtiers beginning to talk of that portion of the atmosphere which was made sacred by the presence of the Imperial Majesty<sup>1</sup>. In addition, at the time when the Notitia was compiled, Gaul, the Orient, Thrace, and Illyricum had each its *Magister* of one or both divisions of the army.

It will be well here to put on record the unfavourable opinion of the historian Zosimus with reference to the institution of these offices. The view generally adopted, and that which has been submitted to the reader, is that the separation between the civil and the military functions was a wise measure. Zosimus, however, is of a different opinion, and he holds that Constantine, who first instituted the offices of *Magister Equitum* and *Magister Peditum*, and Theodosius, who so largely increased the number of these officers, both did ill service to the state. The charge against the second Emperor seems more reasonable than that brought against the first; but here are the words of the indictment:—  
 'Having thus divided the rule of the Prefect [into the four Prefectures], Constantine studied how to lessen his power in other ways. For whereas the soldiers were under the orders not only of centurions and tribunes<sup>2</sup>, but also of the so-called *Duces*, who exercised the office

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.  
The division of the civil and military offices unfavourably criticised by Zosimus.

Zosimus,  
ii. 33.

<sup>1</sup> In the East there were two *Magistri Militum in Praesenti*, each of whom had command both of infantry and cavalry. The reason for this arrangement is not clear. Is it possible that it was made at the time when the Imperial Presence was pretty evenly divided between the two capitals, Constantinople and Antioch?

<sup>2</sup> *χιλάρχοι*.



BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

of general in each district, Constantine appointed *Magistri*<sup>1</sup>, one of the cavalry, and another of the infantry, to whom he transferred the duty of stationing the troops and the punishment of military offences, and at the same time he deprived the Prefects of this prerogative. A measure this, which was equally pernicious in peace and war, as I will proceed to show. So long as the Prefects were collecting the revenues from all quarters by means of their subordinates, and defraying out of them the expenses of the army, while they also had the power of punishing the men as they thought fit for all offences against discipline, so long the soldiers, remembering that he who supplied them with their rations was also the man who would correct them if they offended, did not dare to transgress, lest they should find their supplies stopped and themselves promptly chastised. But now that one man is responsible for the commissariat and another man is their professional superior, they act in all things according to their own will and pleasure, to say nothing of the fact that the greater part of the money allotted to the provisioning of the troops goes into the pockets of the general and his staff.'

Zosimus,  
iv. 27.

'Meanwhile the Emperor Theodosius, who was residing at Thessalonica, showed much affability to all with whom he came in contact, but his luxury and neglect of state affairs soon became proverbial. He threw all the previously existing offices into confusion, and made the commanders of the army more numerous than before. For whereas there was before one Master of the Horse and one of the Foot, now he distributed these offices among more than five persons. Thereby

<sup>1</sup> στρατηλάται.

he increased the public burdens (for each of these five or more commanders-in-chief had the same allowances as one of the two had before), and he handed over his soldiers to the avarice of this increased number of generals. For as each of these new Magistri thought himself bound to make as much out of his office as a Magister had made before when there were only two of them, there was no way to do it but by jobbing the food supplied to the soldiers. And not only so, but he created Lieutenants of Cavalry and Captains and Brigadiers <sup>1</sup> in such numbers that he left two or three times the number that he found, while the privates, of all the money that was assigned to them out of the public chest, received nothing.'

9. *Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi*. We now come to a branch of administration which, as statesmanship declined, became surrounded with more and more awful importance, the Imperial, or in the language of the day the Sacred, Household. The fortunate eunuch who attained to the dignity of Superintendent of the Sacred Bedchamber, took rank in the year 384 immediately after the other Illustres <sup>2</sup>. But a solemn edict <sup>3</sup>, issued in 422 by the grandson and namesake of the great Theodosius, ordained that 'when the nobles of the Empire shall be admitted to adore our Serenity, the Superintendent of the Sacred Bedchamber shall be entitled to the same rank with the Praetorian and Urban Prefects and the Masters of the Army'; in front, that is to say, of the humbler departments of Law and Finance, represented by the Master of the Offices, the

BOOK I.  
Ch. 12.

<sup>1</sup> Ἰλάρχας καὶ λοχαγούς καὶ ταξιάρχους.

<sup>2</sup> Cod. Theod. lib. vii, tit. 8, § 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cod. Theod. lib. vi, tit. 8, § 1.

BOOK I. Quaestor, and the Count of the Sacred Largesses. The  
 CH. 12. wardrobe of the sovereign, the gold plate, the arrangement of the Imperial meal, the spreading of the sacred couch, the government of the corps of brilliantly attired pages, the posting of the thirty *silentiarii* who, in helmet and cuirass, standing before the second veil, guarded the slumbers of the sovereign, these were the momentous responsibilities which required the undivided attention of a Cabinet Minister of the Roman Empire.

Count of  
 the Private  
 Domains.

10. The *Comes Rerum Privatarum*, whom we may compare to our Commissioners of Woods and Forests, held an office which must sometimes have been not easily distinguishable from that of the Count of Sacred Largesses. Only, while the latter officer handled the whole revenue raised by taxation, the former was especially charged with the administration of the Imperial Domain. In the language of our law he dealt with realty rather than personalty. The vast estates belonging to the Emperor, concentrated in the city, or scattered over all the provinces of the West<sup>1</sup>, were administered under his direction. He had to see that they were let to suitable tenants, to guard against the usurpation of 'squatters<sup>2</sup>,' to keep a watch upon the Superintendents of the Imperial Stables, the Sheepmasters, the Foresters. A corps of porters, who were perhaps originally organised in order to convey to the palace the various delicacies grown on the domains of

<sup>1</sup> The *Notitia Occidentis*, cap. xi, has a long string of such private Imperial possessions; the *Notitia Orientis*, in the corresponding chapter, does not mention any. It would be interesting to know the reason of this difference.

<sup>2</sup> See the '*Formula Comitivae Privatarum*,' Cassiodorus, *Variae*, vi. 8.

the Emperor, were also placed under his control. And lastly, as one of his chief subordinates was styled Count of the *Private Largesses* <sup>1</sup>, he must have had charge of outgoings as well as incomings, and must have fulfilled some of the duties which now devolve on the Keeper of the Privy Purse.

11, 12. *Comes Domesticorum Equitum; Comes Domesticorum Peditum*. These officers (who are sometimes called 'Counts of the Domestics') commanded the various divisions of the household troops, known by the names of *Domestici* and *Protectores*, and thus together replaced the Praetorian Prefect of the earlier days of the Empire. The *Notitia* fails to inform us what number of troops were subject to their orders. Theoretically their duties would not greatly differ from those of a Colonel in the Guards. Practically the Count of the Domestics often intervened with a most decisive voice in the deliberations respecting the choice of a candidate when a vacancy occurred upon the Imperial throne<sup>2</sup>.

The Illustrious Ministers, whose offices have now been described, formed the nucleus of the *Consistorium*, the council with which the Emperor was accustomed, but of course in no way bound, to consult upon all great matters of state. Such a Consistory was probably held at Antioch when Valens was deliberating concerning the admission of the Visigoths into the Empire.

<sup>1</sup> 'Sub dispositione viri illustris Comit<sup>is</sup> Rerum Privatarum, Comes Largitionum Privatarum (*Notitia Occidentis*, cap. xi). This officer is not named in the corresponding passage of the *Notit. Orientis*.

<sup>2</sup> There is some apparent conflict of jurisdiction in the *Notitia* between the *Comites Domesticorum* and the *Magister Officiorum*. The latter has under his control seven 'Schools' of Shield-bearers, Archers, 'Gentiles' or barbarians, &c., who apparently formed part of the household troops.



BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

I shall not here attempt to describe the functions of the *Spectabiles* and the *Clarissimi*. For the most part their offices were mere copies of the offices of the *Illustres* on a smaller and provincial scale. In order however to make clear the gradations of the Imperial hierarchy, a few words must be given to the new territorial divisions introduced by Diocletian. In the first ages of the Empire, the Provinces were the only subordinate division known. Now the size of these was greatly reduced (as an unfriendly critic<sup>1</sup> says, 'the Provinces were cut up into bits'), and two divisions, the Prefecture and the Diocese, were introduced above them.

Prefec-  
tures.

Of the Prefectures, as has already been explained, there were four, each, let us say, about as large as the European Empire of Charles the Fifth.

## Dioceses.

Of the Dioceses there were thirteen. We must empty our minds of all ecclesiastical associations connected with this word, associations which would pin us down to far too small an area. For practical purposes it will be sufficient to consider an Imperial Diocese as the equivalent of a 'country.'

## Provinces.

The Provinces, 116 in number, were, as a rule, somewhat larger than a French Province of average size. Many of the frontier lines still survive, especially in ecclesiastical geography. Where the lines are not the same, how infinitely various have been the causes of change! The course of trade, the conflict of creeds,

<sup>1</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, cap. 7. 'Et ut omnia terrore complerentur, *provinciae quoque in frusta concisae*, multi praesides et plura officia singulis regionibus, ac pene jam civitatibus incubare, item Rationales multi, et Magistri, et Vicarii praefectorum, quibus omnibus civiles actus admodum rari, sed condemnationes tantum et proscriptiones frequentes,' &c.



war and love, crusades and tournaments, and the whole romance of the Middle Ages, might all be illustrated by the lecturer who should take for his text the map of Europe as divided by Constantine and as it was marked out at the time of the Reformation.

A glance at the following table will bring the chief divisions of the Empire in the fourth century clearly before the mind of the reader :

PREFECTURE.	DIOCESE.	NO. OF PRO- VINCES.	MODERN EQUIVALENT OF DIOCESE.
I. Italiae	1. Italia	17	Italy, Tyrol, Grisons, South Bavaria.
	2. Illyricum	6	Austria between the Danube and Adriatic, Bosnia.
	3. Africa	7	Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli.
II. Galliae	4. Hispaniae	7	Spain and Morocco.
	5. Septem Provinciae	17	France, with the Rhine boundary.
	6. Britanniae	5	England and Wales, Scotland south of Frith of Forth.
III. Illyricum	7. Macedonia	6	Macedon, Epirus, Greece.
	8. Dacia	5	Servia and Western Bulgaria.
IV. Oriens	9. Oriens	15	Syria, Palestine, and Cilicia.
	10. Aegyptus	5	Egypt.
	11. Asiana	10	South-Western half of Asia Minor.
	12. Pontica	10	North-Eastern half of Asia Minor.
	13. Thracia	6	Eastern Bulgaria and Roumelia.
		116	

The separation between the civil and military functions was carried down through all the divisions and

BOOK I. subdivisions of the Empire, and the following may be  
 CH. 12. taken as the type of the gradations of rank thus pro-  
 duced:

Typical  
 arrange-  
 ment of  
 offices.

	CIVIL OFFICERS.	MILITARY OFFICERS.
Prefecture	Illustris PRAEFECTUS PRAETORIO	Illustris MAGISTER MILITUM.
Diocese	Spectabilis VICARIUS	Spectabilis COMES.
Province	Clarissimus <i>Consularis</i> , or <i>Corrector</i> or Perfectissimus Praeses	Spectabilis DUX.

(The Illustres are marked by large capitals, the Spectabiles by small capitals, the Clarissimi by Italic, and the Perfectissimi by Roman type.)

The subordination of the military offices was not quite so regular as that of the civil. Some of the Provinces of the interior scarcely required an army at all, while on an exposed frontier two or three large armies might be assembled. But the general idea of the subordination of offices is that shown above. To make this point quite clear let us examine the arrangement of Imperial functionaries in the two 'Dioceses' with which we have most concern, Britain and Italy.

Illustrated  
 by the  
 Diocese of  
 Britain.

That part of our own island which was subject to the Romans (the *Dioecesis Britanniarum*) was divided into five Provinces, which are conjecturally identified as follows<sup>1</sup>:

1. Britannia Prima = the country south of the Thames and Bristol Channel.
2. Britannia Secunda = Wales.
3. Flavia Caesariensis = the Midland and Eastern Counties.

<sup>1</sup> We do not yet possess any authoritative statement as to the boundaries of the British Provinces.

4. Maxima Caesariensis = the country between Humber and Tyne. BOOK I.  
CH. 12.
5. Valentia = the country between Tyne and Frith of Forth.

The first two Provinces were governed by (Perfectissimi) Praesides, the last three by (Clarissimi) *Consulares*. Civil Adminis-  
trators.

The chief military leaders were : Military.

1. The Count of Britain (COMES BRITANNIAE).
2. The Count of the Saxon shore (COMES LITORIS SAXONICI PER BRITANNIAM), who from his nine strong castles dotted along the coast, from Yarmouth to Shoreham, was bound to watch the ever-recurring Saxon pirates.
3. The DUKE OF THE BRITAINS, whose headquarters were probably at York, and who had under his control the Sixth Legion stationed in that city, and various detachments of auxiliary troops posted along the line of the wall in Northumberland ('per lineam Valli'), and in the stations upon the great Roman roads through Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumberland.

It is not expressly stated that these last two officers were subject to the control of the first, the Count of Britain, but we may reasonably infer that they were so from the fact that all the details of the troops subject to them are given with great minuteness, while of him it is only said, 'Under the control of the Spectabilis the Count of Britain is the Province of Britain.'

In civil matters there can be no doubt that the VICARIUS was supreme, and he probably administered

BOOK I. his diocese from 'the city of Augusta, which the ancients  
CH. 12. called Lundinium<sup>1</sup>.'

Financial. In financial matters we find an Accountant for the receipts of Britain (*Rationalis Summarum Britanniarum*), and a Superintendent of the Treasury at Augusta (*Praepositus thesaurorum Augustensium*), who appear to owe no obedience to the VICARIUS, but are directly subordinate to the COMES SACRARUM LARGITIONUM (at Rome or Ravenna). Similarly the Accountant of the Emperor's private estate in Britain (*Rationalis rei privatae per Britannias*) reports himself immediately to the Illustrious the COMES RERUM PRIVATARUM.

Adminis-  
tration of  
Italy.

Praefectus  
urbis.

Vicarius  
urbis.

Vicarius  
Italiae.

This illustration, drawn from the Roman government of our own island in the fourth century, may help us to understand the similar details which are given of the civil and military administration of Italy. The system is here, however, somewhat complicated by the extraordinary powers vested, as we have before seen, in the PRAEFECTUS URBIS. Though the geographical limits of his power are not expressly indicated in the *Notitia*, we find that his subordinate VICARIUS, who is not likely to have had a wider jurisdiction than himself, controlled the administration of seven Provinces in Italy, besides the three islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. These seven Provinces in fact made up the whole of Italy south of Ancona on the east coast, and Spezia on the west; and thus, little beside the valley of the Po and the countries at the foot of the Alps was left to the somewhat hardly-treated official who bore the high-sounding title of *Spectabilis VICARIUS ITALIAE*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ammianus, xxviii. 3. I.

<sup>2</sup> The ten Provinces subject to the VICARIUS URBIS ROMAE were







MAP OF ITALY  
at the commencement of the  
FIFTH CENTURY

Scale  
0 25 50 100 150  
Roman Miles

VICARIUS ITALIAE  
D<sup>o</sup> URBIS

To indemnify him,—but in those days of trouble with the heaving nations of Germany the charge must have brought more toil than profit,—he superintended the government of the Raetias, provinces which reached from the Alps to the Danube, and of which Coire and Augsburg were the respective capitals <sup>1</sup>.

Of high military officers in Italy we read very little in the Notitia, doubtless because the great masters of the horse and foot ‘in Praesenti’ overshadowed all other commanding officers in the near neighbourhood of the court. There is a COMES ITALIAE, whose duty it was to look after the defence of the country close round the bases of the Alps (‘Tractus Italiae circa Alpes’), and whose charge is illustrated in the effigy at the head of the chapter by two turreted fortresses climbing at an impossible angle up two dolomitic mountain peaks.

The DUX RAETIAE also is mentioned, who with twenty-one detachments of auxiliary troops—among them a cohort of Britons stationed near to Ratisbon—held the posts on the Danube and by Lake Constance and in the fastnesses of the Tyrol.

Reviewing now this great civil and military hierarchy, which was invented by Diocletian, perfected by Constantine, and was still majestic under Theodosius, we

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

Military  
commands  
in Italy.

Titles and  
ideas of  
Roman Imperialism  
perpetuated.

(1) Campania, (2) Tuscia et Umbria, (3) Picenum Suburbicarium, (4) Sicily,—each under the administration of a *Clarissimus Consularis*; (5) Apulia et Calabria, (6) Bruttii et Lucania,—under a *Clarissimus Corrector*; (7) Samnium, (8) Sardinia, (9) Corsica, (10) Valeria,—under a *Perfectissimus Praeses*.

<sup>1</sup> The Provinces subject to the VICARIUS ITALIAE were apparently (1) Venetia et Istria, (2) Aemilia, (3) Liguria, (4) Flaminia et Picenum Annonicarium, (5) Alpes Cottiae, (6) Raetia Prima, (7) Raetia Secunda, But his page in the Notitia is lost, and a good deal has to be left to conjecture.



BOOK I. see at once how many titles, and through them how  
 CH. 12. many ideas, modern European civilisation has borrowed  
 from that subtly elaborated world of graduated splendour. The Duke and the Count of modern Europe—what are they but the Generals and Companions (Duces and Comites) of a Roman province? Why or when they changed places, the Duke climbing up into such unquestioned pre-eminence over his former superior the Count, it might be difficult to say, as also by what process it was discovered that the latter was the precise equivalent of the Scandinavian *Jarl*. The Prefects of France are a closer reproduction both of the name and of the centralised authority of the Praefecti Praetorio of the Empire. Even the lowest official who has been here named, the Corrector of a province, survives to this day in the Spanish *Corregidor*. In ecclesiastical affairs the same descent exhibits itself. The Pope, who took his own title of Pontifex Maximus from Caesar, and named his legates after Caesar's lieutenants, now sits surrounded by his purple-robed councillors to hold what he calls, after Constantine, his Consistory. Diocese and Vicar are words which have also survived in the service of the Church, both, it may be said, with lessened dignity; yet not altogether so, for if the Vicarius of Britain or Africa was greater than the modern Vicar of an English parish, he was less than the mighty spiritual ruler who, claiming the whole world as his Diocese, asserts his right to rule therein as 'The Vicar of Christ'<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The ceremony of kissing the Pope's toe is probably also derived from the Emperor's Court. Dion says of Caligula, 'He kissed very few [of his courtiers]. For to the greater number even of the Senators he only stretched out a hand or a foot for them to kiss,' lib. lix, c. 27.

Thus do the strata of modern society bear witness to the primary Imperial rock from which they sprang. On the other hand, it is curious to observe how few of the titles of old republican Rome survived into these latter days of the Empire. Tribunes indeed we do find in the Notitia, but they are chiefly military officers. Of Quaestors, Aediles, Praetors, the offices which in old days formed the successive steps on the ladder of promotion to the highest dignities of the state, we find traces indeed, but of the faintest possible kind, in the Notitia. The Consulate, it is true, still retained much of its ancient splendour. The Emperor was generally invested with this dignity several times during his reign. Claudian's enthusiastic congratulations show how it was prized by the sons of Probus. Pacatus speaks of it as the highest honour which Theodosius was able to bestow upon his friends<sup>1</sup>. Sidonius, eighty years later, says that he and his brother-in-law, who were by birth sons of Prefects, have attained the honour of the Patriciate, and he hopes that their sons may crown the edifice by the Consulate. But though the office of Consul retained its social pre-eminence it had no practical power. Not once does the name occur in the Notitia; not the meanest functionary is mentioned as being 'under his control.' The Vicar reflected the Prefect and the Prefect the Emperor. Power earned by the suffrages of the people was nowhere; power delegated by the Divine Emperor was irresistible and all-prevailing.

One office indeed there was which might seem to require some limitation of the statement which has just been made. The *Defensor Civitatis* derived his

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.  
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Office of  
the De-  
fensor.

<sup>1</sup> Paneg. xvi.

BOOK I.

CH. 12.

power, theoretically at any rate, from the popular vote, and was in theory a counterpoise to the otherwise uncontrolled dominion of the Imperial officials; and yet it might with some fairness be argued that the history of the Defensor's office is the most striking illustration of the tendency of all power in the Empire to become Imperial.

It is believed that these Defenders of the Cities came into being in the first half of the fourth century, but the first distinct trace of them in the Statute-book is in a law of 364<sup>1</sup>, addressed by Valentinian and Valens to the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, Probus, a governor whose unjust exactions<sup>2</sup> must often have made the Provincials under his rule sigh for a Defender from such a ruler. The functions of the *Defensor* were eloquently expressed in an edict addressed by Theodosius to a holder of the office<sup>3</sup>. 'The *Defensores* of all the Provinces are to exercise their powers for the space of five years<sup>4</sup>. Thou must in the first place exhibit the character of a father to the commonalty: thou must not suffer either the rustics or the city-dwellers to be vexed with inordinate assessments. Meet the insolence of office and the arrogance of the Judge with proper firmness, yet always preserving the reverence which is due to the magistrate. Claim thy right of freely entering into the Judge's presence when thou shalt desire to do so. Exclude all unjust claims and attempts at the spoliation of those whom it is thy duty to cherish as thy children, and do not suffer anything beyond the accustomed imposts to be demanded of

<sup>1</sup> Cod. Theod. i. 29. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> Cod. Justin. i. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Afterwards reduced to two by Justinian, Nov. 15, c. 1.



these men who certainly can be guarded by no arm but thine.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

We can gather with sufficient clearness from this edict what were the duties of the new officer, whom, perhaps with some slumbering memories of the Tribunes of the Plebs in republican Rome, the Emperors were now creating to be a check on the venal rapacity of their own judges and tax-collectors. He was to be the perpetual advocate of the municipality, to maintain its rights against usurping officials, to resist all attempts at illegitimate and excessive taxation, to be a sort of embodied Habeas Corpus Act on behalf of the poorer and friendless citizens. He was chosen by the voice of the whole community, but his name had to be submitted to the Praetorian Prefect for his approval, and he was confirmed in his office by that high functionary. In order to secure in the new officer a sufficient amount of courage and independence for the exercise of his duties, it was expressly provided that he should not be chosen from the class of *decurions*, the local vestry-men, corresponding to those Senators of Antioch whose woes we were recently considering<sup>1</sup>. For the *decurion*, as we shall see more plainly in a later chapter, was a being born to be pillaged and oppressed, and was always trembling before the frowns of power.

But this requirement, that the *Defensor* should be a man of rank and importance in the State, ruined a well-meant plan. The *Defensor* took upon himself the airs of a great official; he gradually became a real magistrate; his jurisdiction, which at first extended only to cases where an amount of sixty *solidi* (£36) was at stake, was enlarged so as to include cases

<sup>1</sup> See chap. 9.

BOOK I. relating to five times that amount. And as he grew  
 CH. 12. in importance and power, he evidently became more  
 ——— and more unapproachable by his ‘children,’ the humbler  
 485. class of tax-payers, so that before the end of a century  
 from the first appearance of the name in the Statute-  
 book, we find a law passed to repress the insolence and  
 injustice of the *Defensor*, and to recall him to a re-  
 membrance of the object for which he was appointed.  
 So true it is that every office takes the colour of the  
 State on which it is engrafted. In a monarchy which  
 has become democratic we see even the professed ser-  
 vants of the monarch pandering to the passions of the  
 crowd; while in a republic which had become Imperial  
 even the constituted champions of the commonalty  
 were found before long in the ranks of its oppressors.

Military  
 organisa-  
 tion of the  
 Empire.

In conclusion, though the proper subject of this  
 chapter is civil administration, we may give a glance  
 at another most interesting subject brought before  
 us by the *Notitia Dignitatum*, namely, the condition  
 of the army of the Empire. The information with  
 which the *Notitia* furnishes us on this subject is  
 tantalising by its very fullness. At first sight we  
 seem to have a complete picture of the disposition  
 of all the legions and all the corps of ‘federate’  
 infantry and cavalry over the whole Empire. But  
 on closer examination we find that there are great  
 gaps in the statement thus laid before us. De-  
 ficiencies in one place, redundancies in another, be-  
 wilder us in our attempt to construct a definite scheme  
 of the military organisation of the State. It will  
 probably require some years of patient labour, espe-  
 cially of comparison of this ill-edited army-list with the  
 slowly accumulating evidence of inscriptions, before

anything like safe and definite conclusions can be reached as to the magnitude and the composition of those armies on the Danube and the Rhine, which did not avail to save the Empire from the impact of the barbarians.

Meanwhile, however, it may be stated very roughly, that the Notitia appears to display to us a force whose nominal strength was nearly a million of men, and that this force was pretty evenly divided between the Eastern and the Western portions of the Empire<sup>1</sup>. There can be no doubt, however, that this number is enormously in excess of the troops which Rome could actually put in the field. The legions especially (the theoretical strength of which at this time was 6100 foot soldiers, with cavalry attached to the number of

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.  
Nominal  
strength  
of the  
Imperial  
army.

<sup>1</sup> If we take, with a little necessary correction, the numbers which Von Wietersheim deduces from the Notitia, we get these results:—

	<i>Eastern Empire.</i>	<i>Western Empire.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Infantry	{ 70 legions . . = 427,000 43 auxilia, and other bodies of infantry, not legions . . . = 21,500	{ 62 legions . . = 372,600 65 auxilia, &c. = 32,500	799,600 54,000
Cavalry	{ 43 vexillations, and other bodies of cavalry . . = 21,500	{ 48 vexillations, &c. . . . = 24,000	45,500
	470,000	429,100	899,100

But there is a great deal of guess-work in all this. Especially the estimate of 500 men for the non-legionary bodies of infantry is probably too low for their *nominal* strength.

Marquardt, a very careful writer, reckons, besides the above total of 132 legions, '43 other legions besides: thus in all 175 legions,' which at 6100 men to a legion would give a total of 1,067,500 men on paper, exclusive of cavalry and irregulars. He however accepts the view of the greatly diminished strength of the legion: and he wisely observes, 'I give these numbers only as approximations. Their verification involves some difficulties, to solve which a thorough investigation would be required.' (Römische Staatsverwaltung, ii. 588.)

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

730<sup>1)</sup> appears sometimes in history in such a miserably attenuated condition, that some writers<sup>2</sup> have asserted that even in theory it only consisted of 1000 men, an alteration which would require us to reduce the estimate just given to little more than a sixth. For any such formal and theoretical reduction, however, there does not appear to be sufficient authority. The following sentences from a contemporary author probably set forth the true state of the case. ‘The name of the legions still abides in our army, but through negligence the strength which it possessed in old days is broken, the rewards of valour being now given to intrigue, and the soldier’s promotion which he used to earn by toil being now given by favour. When the veteran has earned his discharge, having completed his term of service, there is no one to take his place. Moreover, some must be incapacitated for service by disease, others will desert or perish by one accident or another, so that unless every year, I might almost say every month, a troop of young recruits is brought in to fill the places of those who fall out, a legion, however numerous at the outset, soon dwindles. There is another reason for our attenuated legions, namely, the great labour of service therein, their heavier arms, their more numerous duties, their severer discipline. In order to escape these, most recruits rush to take the military oath in the auxiliary forces where the toil is less and the rewards sooner earned<sup>3</sup>.’

Classifica-  
tion of the  
soldiery.

This last remark leads us to consider the different

<sup>1</sup> Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Including Gibbon, cap. xvii. n. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, ii. 3.



classes of troops, which, according to the Notitia, BOOK I.  
composed the Imperial army. The 132 legions which CH. 12.  
were enumerated above are divided into three ranks.  
These are :—

25 *legiones Palatinae.*

70 *legiones Comitatusenses.*

37 *legiones Pseudo-Comitatusenses.*

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132

The first class, the ‘legions of the Palace,’ speak for themselves. If not in the strictest sense the body-guard of the sovereign, a title which more fittingly belongs to the high-born and brilliantly accoutred *Domestici* and *Protectores*, they are at any rate those troops who are most immediately under the eye of the Emperor, and who will be first grouped round his standard when he goes forth to war. Legiones  
Palatinae.

Over against these ‘*legiones Palatinae*’ are found Auxilia  
Palatina. certain non-legionary bodies of troops, forty-three in number in the East and sixty-five in the West, called the *Auxilia Palatina*. To read through the titles of these regiments is to study the morbid anatomy of the dying Empire. You find there the name of almost every barbarian nationality that was hovering on its borders, the cannibal Atacotti of Scotland, the Heruli, the Thervingi, the Moors. Then there are names like those of our battle-ships, the *Petulantes*, the *Invicti*, the *Victores*; and names derived from the reigning Emperor, the *Valentinianenses*, the *Gratianenses*, the *Felices Theodosiani*, the *Honoriani Victores*, the *Felices Arcadiani*. The terrible name of Goths does not appear on the list, but there can be little doubt that among these barbarian satellites of the Emperor were to be



BOOK I. found a large number of those yellow-haired Visigothic  
 CH. 12. *foederati*, whose golden collars roused the envy, and whose arrogant demeanour kindled the resentment of the Roman legionaries. In the regiment of Gratianenses there may very likely have still been serving some of those very Alans, his partiality for whom cost the ill-fated Gratian his life.

Legiones  
 Comita-  
 tenses.

From the *legiones Palatinae* and their attendant *auxilia* we pass to the *legiones Comitatusenses*, evidently a large and important portion of the Imperial army. In the laws of this period they are generally coupled with the *Palatini*, and it is not easy to see what was the difference between them, for *Comitatus* is used for court as *Palatium* for palace. It is conjectured with some probability that the *legiones Comitatusenses*<sup>1</sup> may have held something like the same position towards the 'Masters of the Soldiery' that the *legiones Palatinae* held towards the Emperor. And though we cannot prove the point, there seems some reason to connect these 'Comitatusian' legions with the assertion of Zosimus<sup>2</sup>, that Constantine withdrew the bulk of his troops from the fortresses on the frontier and stationed them in the cities of the interior, where they became demoralised by urban pleasures and a long peace.

Legiones  
 Pseudo-  
 Comita-  
 tenses.

For it seems clear that the duty of guarding the frontier, taken off from these pampered 'courtly' legions, was in great measure devolved upon their inferiors, who went by the uncouth name of *Pseudo-Comitatusenses* or 'sham-courtly' troops. These plebeians of the army received only four rations where the Comitatusenses received six; they were probably

<sup>1</sup> By Von Wietersheim, i. 317 (ed. 1880).

<sup>2</sup> ii. 34.

of lower stature<sup>1</sup>, received in several ways fewer privileges than their envied superiors.

BOOK I.  
CH. 12.

Lastly, there was a class of troops of whom the Notitia gives us only fragmentary and imperfect information, the *Limitanei* or *Ripenses*. These were apparently a kind of militia stationed on the frontiers of the Empire, along the great rivers, the Rhine and the Danube; where Egypt looks forth upon the desert; or where the Parthian was hovering round Mesopotamia. They were probably not mere soldiers, but cultivated the soil and practised the arts of peace; always, however, under special obligation to take up arms at the approach of an enemy and defend the land which they tilled. We would gladly receive further information as to this body of men whose status in some degree foreshadows that of the feudal soldiers of the Middle Ages, while at the same time some of them must surely have been found among the defenders of the great Roman Walls in Britain and in Germany.

Limitanei  
or Ri-  
penses.

A survey of this most interesting document, the Notitia, as a whole, and a comparison of it with the Theodosian Code, suggest some reflections as to the relative capacity of the Romans as warriors and as administrators. The citizens of the little stronghold by the Tiber had first made their mark on Latium by their fierce determination in war. As their territory grew, their powers of government developed, and when they were the undisputed lords of all the fair countries

Roman  
military  
organisa-  
tion in-  
ferior to  
the civil.

<sup>1</sup> By Cod. Theod. vii. 13. 3 the stature of the recruit is to be not less than 5 feet 7 inches. I imagine this to be the *comitatensis*, but we have no proof on the subject. By vii. 22. 8 it is enacted that the sons of veterans who in strength or stature do not come up to the standard of a *comitatensis* shall serve in the *Militia Ripensis*.

round the Mediterranean Sea they did in truth fulfil with wonderful success the charge given to them in the poet's imagination by the spirit of their ancestor:—

‘Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.’

At the period which we have now reached in the history of that vast accumulation of peoples which still called itself the Roman Republic, the old Roman spirit of delight in battle was departed, but the Roman genius for law and administration still remained. The Seventh Book of the Theodosian Code gives us a dreary picture of the military state of the Empire. The sons of the veterans have to be forced to follow the profession of their fathers. Self-mutilation to avoid military service is frequent. The man who does enter the army seems to be only intent on avoiding his obligations as a tax-payer, or oppressing his fellow-citizens by unreasonable demands when he is billeted upon them. And while the pages of the *Notitia*, which deal with the civil constitution of the Empire, display to us a great, well-organised, official hierarchy,—corrupt it may have been, oppressive it may have been, but one in which every wheel of the great administrative machine knew its place and performed its office,—the military chapters of that book seem to be a perfect chaos. Fragments of the same legion are dispersed hither and thither, some under the command of the *Magister Militum in Praesenti*, some under the Duke of a province. It would seem to have been in the last degree difficult for the Prefect of a legion to ascertain accurately who were subordinate to him, and to whom he was subordinate. All the mistakes and the heart-burnings to which divided responsibility and ill-defined

prerogatives give birth, seem to be here prepared in BOOK I.  
CH. 12. abundant measure. Instead of keeping the noble legions of the early Empire, the 25 of Augustus or the 33 of Severus, up to their full strength, and enabling them to do deeds worthy of their great traditions, each Emperor seems to form a number of fresh legions, some of which he calls after his own name and some after the name of the latest tribe of barbarians to whom he has taken a fancy. But whether they be called 'Happy Honorians,' or 'Senior Britons,' or 'Lancers of Comagene,' in any case we feel certain that they are not a legion in the old magnificent sense of the word. The full complement of officers may be there, exhausting the treasury by their exorbitant *Annonae*, or parading their gorgeous equipments before the eyes of a gratified Emperor, but when the Goth or the Frank appears upon the frontiers of the Empire where such a mushroom legion is stationed, we feel sure that he will not find 6000 stout soldiers ready to resist him.

In short, the perusal of the Notitia and the Code leaves us with the conviction that not even Valentinian nor Theodosius, and certainly none of their successors, was a Carnot or a von Moltke, able to 'organise victory.' The civil administration of the Empire was marvellous, and it left its mark upon Europe for centuries, but the military administration at the close of the fourth century was a fabric pervaded by dry-rot, and it crumbled at the touch of the barbarian.

## CHAPTER XIII.

HONORIUS, STILICHO, ALARIC.

### Authorities.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

#### *Sources :—*

As we shall have for the next two chapters to depend to a large extent on CLAUDIAN, it may be convenient to have the following table of his historical poems to refer to :—

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Subject.</i>
395.	Consulship of Probinus and Olybrius.
396.	Against Rufinus (two books). Third Consulship of Honorius.
398.	Fourth Consulship of Honorius. Poems on the Marriage of Honorius and Maria. On the War with Gildo.
399.	Consulship of Fl. Mallius Theodorus. Against Eutropius (two books).
400.	First Consulship of Stilicho (three books). (The so-called poem on the Second Consulship of Stilicho is the third of these.)
402 or 403.	On the Gothic War (De Bello Getico).
404.	On the Sixth Consulship of Honorius.
406 (?).	Praise of Serena.

It can hardly be necessary to warn the reader to receive with the utmost caution everything that Claudian utters by way of praise of Stilicho or depreciation of Stilicho's enemies. One reason why I have generally preserved the metrical form in



quoting from Claudian's poems has been to keep the unhistorical character of this source prominently in view. It is impossible not to use an author who supplies us with almost all the life and colour which historical portraiture requires, but he must be used with continual distrust when the characters of his patrons or their enemies are at stake. Also, a history which has to depend so largely on poetical materials, is almost of necessity incomplete, as if one should attempt to write the history of the early part of Charles II's reign from Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*, or that of the Peninsular War from a series of University Prize Poems.

ZOSIMUS (previously described) and

OROSIUS are the chief authorities upon the side unfavourable to the character of Stilicho.

Paulus Orosius, a native of Tarragona in Spain, and a friend of Augustine, wrote his Seven Books of 'Histories' about the year 417, while he was still a young man ('religiosus juvenis'). at the request of the Bishop of Hippo. They were to form a history of the world from the Deluge down to his own time (the last entry relates to the year 417), and the object of the book was to show that bloodshed, oppression, and misery, had ever been the staple of human history, and that 'Christian times' were unjustly blamed for the woes which the barbarians were then inflicting on the Empire. It is a necessary feature in a work undertaken with this view that it should deal rather with universal than contemporary history, and in fact only the last half of the seventh book is devoted to the events of the fourth and early part of the fifth centuries. That portion of the book which might have been of some value as a contemporary authority is thus reduced within somewhat narrow limits, and, unfortunately, the deficiency in quantity is not atoned for by excellence in quality. Vague, passionate, and declamatory, Orosius represents only the narrow prejudices of an orthodox provincial of the Empire in his judgments concerning the men and the events of that mighty crisis. Neither barbarians nor unsound Christians have any chance of fair treatment at his hands, and under both categories Stilicho is odious to him. Yet even Orosius is not without his use as furnishing a corrective to the extravagant and indiscriminate flattery of Claudian.

*Guides :—*

Amédée Thierry's '*Trois Ministres des fils de Théodose—Rufin, Eutrope, Stilicon*' (Paris, 1865). The style and arrangement of this book are admirable, but there is a want of accuracy in the details, and a not sufficiently close adherence to the authorities. When, for instance, M. Thierry develops (p. 326) from one slight and vague hint in a poem of Claudian's a long story about the attempts to force Placidia to marry Eucherius, son of Stilicho, and her obstinate struggle to preserve her freedom, he is writing not a history but a romance; and this is the more to be regretted because a novelistic incident like this, so confidently stated by a historian of eminence, is eagerly caught up by his successors and soon becomes part of the *Textus Receptus* of History.

E. von Wietersheim's '*Geschichte der Völker-Wanderung*' (Leipzig, 4 vols. 1859-64, and a new edition in 2 vols. revised by Felix Dahn, 1880-1) is especially valuable as containing the reflections of one who had been himself engaged in the work of administration, on the causes of the disruption of the Roman Empire. The Roman, official side of the history was in the original work more satisfactorily treated than that which concerned the life of the barbarian invaders of the Empire. In Prof. Dahn's edition this inequality is removed by the hand which was best fitted to paint the Teutonic background of the history.

J. B. Bury's '*History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene*' (London, 2 vols., 1889) is a book to which henceforth I wish continually to refer my readers for a fuller description of those events in the Eastern Empire which lie from this time beyond my proper horizon. Having worked in the same field I can perhaps appreciate better than many the enormous amount of patient labour which is represented by these two modest volumes; and I am bound to add that where he expresses dissent from my conclusions he generally convinces me that I am wrong. He takes a much more unfavourable view than I do of the character of Stilicho; but this is just one of the points on which a jury of historians is not likely to be unanimous, I might perhaps say, ought not to be unanimous; and I gladly refer the student to Mr. Bury's pages for a fair and powerful statement of the case against Stilicho.

Dr. Güldenpenning's '*Geschichte des Oströmischen Reiches*

unter den Kaisern Arcadius und Theodosius II' (Halle, 1885) is as good a piece of work as its predecessor, so frequently referred to in the foregoing pages. BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

By the death of Theodosius a division, which proved to be practically a final division, was made between the Eastern and Western halves of the Roman Empire, and Honorius, a boy eleven years of age, began to rule over its Western portion.

Britain, Gaul, Spain, the south-west corner of Germany, the western half of the province of Illyricum (comprising Austria west of the Danube, and Dalmatia), Italy, and the African shore of the Mediterranean as far east as Tripoli, were all included in the dominions of the young monarch. The whole of this territory, except the northern part of the British province and the Roman lands east of the Rhine, was still virtually untouched by barbarian invasion. It was the Eastern half of the Empire which had suffered the dangerous aneurism of the Gothic settlement south of the Danube, and which had seen the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia, so near to its capital, harried by the yearly incursions of the barbarians: it was the East which, could a prophet have arisen to announce the impending ruin of one half of the Empire, would have seemed likely to fall the first sacrifice. But the marvellous foresight of Constantine, instructed by the difficulties of his own campaign against Licinius, had led him to root his dynasty in a stronghold which, for the space of nine centuries, was to defy external assault; and that city, the offspring of Imperial Christianity, cherished with grateful devotion the powers to which it owed its being. Old Rome, on the other hand, unfavourably situated for defence, and penetrated with memories of Republican

freedom and Pagan art, visited only at distant intervals by the Emperors, was sinking into a state of sullen isolation, fearing the ruin of the state, yet almost prepared to view with indifference the ruin of the Caesar.

Simultaneously with this renewed division of the Roman Empire a new generation of men, and one destined to witness and to share in mighty revolutions, appeared on the scene. Theodosius is gone. Most of the counsellors and warriors who stood round his throne have disappeared, some having perished in civil war and some having fallen victims to the intrigues of their adversaries. Ambrose, though not in advanced old age, has but two years more to live, and takes no more a conspicuous part in public affairs<sup>1</sup>. The three persons with whom for the next decade and a half we have chiefly to deal are those whose names appear at the head of this chapter—Honorius, Stilicho, Alaric.

We begin with 'Our Master, the Eternal and ever-August Honorius.' What was the character and appearance of the lad who from his palace at Milan issued his edicts to the Western world? Hear first the courtly Claudian :—

'Thee from the fair first dawning of thy life  
A palace nurtured; in triumphal strife  
A camp, bright with the flashing swords of men,

<sup>1</sup> Ambrose died 4th April, 397. (His birth is generally assigned to the year 340, as stated on p. 385, but I am not sure that 333 is not a more probable date.) When he was attacked with his fatal illness Count Stilicho is said to have observed that the death of such a man would be the ruin of Italy. He therefore persuaded some noblemen of Mediolanum whom he knew to be dear to Ambrose to visit him and ask him to pray to God for his own recovery. The Bishop answered, 'I have not so lived among you that I should be ashamed of life: but I fear not to die, for we have a good Lord;' and not many days after he breathed his last.



Nourished thine infancy; for even then  
Thy lofty fortunes brooked no humble home,  
But gave thee life with empire. Thou didst come,  
Meet present from an Empress to her Lord,  
And thee, in purple swathed, his realm adored.  
Rome's victor eagles marked thy earliest day,  
And in the midst of spears thy cradle lay.  
When thou wast born, to Rhine's extremest floods  
Germania trembled, the Caucasian woods  
Shook with new terror. Meroë<sup>1</sup> no more  
—Fearing thy power divine—her quiver bore,  
But from her hair the useless arrows tore.  
Crawling, o'er shields thou mad'st thy childish way,  
And spoils of mighty princes were thy play.'

And again:—

'Spain reared thy sire her golden streams beside,  
But Bosphorus recalls thy birth with pride.  
From the Hesperian threshold rose thy line,  
But bright Aurora was thy nurse divine.  
For such a prize what eager strife is shown  
Since, of two worlds, each claims thee for her own.  
Thebes gloried in the might of Hercules  
And joy of Bacchus, both her offspring these;  
Delos stood still to mark Apollo's birth,  
The tiny Thunderer crept o'er Cretan earth;  
But more than Delos, more than Crete, must be  
The land which fostered thy divinity.  
No narrow shores could our new god receive,  
Nor might rough Cynthian rocks thy members grieve.  
Thy mother lay on gold, with gems arrayed,  
When upon Tyrian cushions thou wast laid.  
A palace echoed to her labour's cry,  
And oh! what tokens of thy fortunes high  
Abounded then! what flight, what call of birds,  
And from pale prophets what mysterious words!  
Of thy great name the hornèd Ammon spoke,  
Delphi for thee her age-long silence broke.  
The Persian Magi sang of thee; thy power  
Thrilled through the Etrurian Augurs; in that hour  
Babylon's sages gazing on the stars  
Read with blank fear the triumph of thy wars.

IV Cons.  
Honorii,  
127-158.

<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia.



BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

And now once more the rocks of Cumæ's cave  
Rang with the shrieks the frenzied Sibyl gave.

No Corybantian priests thy birth-cry drowned  
With cymbals' clash; an army stood around  
In glittering steel; their standards waved above  
Thine infant head, oh, more august than Jove!  
Thou saw'st adoring legions round thee fall,  
And thy shrill cries gave back the trumpet's call.  
Empire and life were thine the selfsame day,  
And in thy cradle did a consul play<sup>1</sup>.  
By thy new name the new-born year was known,  
It gave thee being, 'twas given thee for thine own.  
Quirinus' robe thy mother made thee wear,  
And helped thee, crawling, to the curule chair.'

Porphyrogenitus, 'born in the Purple Chamber,' is the key-note of the poet's panegyric. This fortunate accident of birth amid the splendours of royalty was not shared by Arcadius, who came into the world while Theodosius was still in a private station.

The childhood of the 'New Divinity' is thus sketched:—

III Cons.  
Honorii,  
23-38.

His child-  
hood.

'First wast thou wont thy victor-sire to greet,  
When he from Ister homeward turned his feet.  
'Twas thou who first didst softly soothe the glance  
Of that still war-o'ershadowed countenance.  
Coaxing, thou pray'dst for trophies from the foe,  
A belt Gelonian, or a Scythian bow,  
A Dacian javelin, or a Suevic rein.  
He on his shining shield, how oft again  
Would raise thee smiling; to his panting breast  
How oft thy little eager form was pressed.  
Thou from the gleaming steel didst fear no harm.  
But to the helmet's crest stretched forth thine arm.  
And then thy sire would say with holy joy,  
King of Olympus! grant that this my boy  
Thus may return victorious from his foe,  
From wasted Parthia, Babylon laid low.

<sup>1</sup> There is a slight poetical licence here. Strictly, Honorius's consulship did not begin till he was fifteen months old, in 386.

Red be his sword like mine ; like mine his breath  
Come panting fast from the great game of Death.  
Be war's delicious dust on every limb,  
And let him bring me spoils as I to him.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

This pretty little picture, borrowed from the *Iliad*, in which Theodosius is equal to Hector, and Honorius is more than Astyanax (for Astyanax did fear 'the dazzling helm and nodding crest'), need not of course have had any existence in reality.

His real character. Crowned nothingness.

Let us now turn from poetry to fact, and see what mark the real Honorius made upon the men and things that surrounded him. None. It is impossible to imagine a character more utterly destitute of moral colour, of self-determining energy, than that of the younger son of Theodosius. In Arcadius we do at length discover traces of uxoriousness, a blemish in some rulers, but which becomes almost a merit in him when contrasted with the absolute vacancy, the inability to love, to hate, to think, to execute, almost to be, which marks the impersonal personality of Honorius. After earnestly scrutinising his life to discover some traces of human emotion under the stolid mask of his countenance, we may perhaps pronounce with some confidence on the three following points.

1. He perceived, through life, the extreme importance of keeping the sacred person of the Emperor of the West out of the reach of danger.

2. He was, at any rate in youth, a sportsman.

3. In his later years he showed considerable interest in the rearing of poultry.

Claudian,  
de IV Cons.  
Honorii,  
527-529.

Procopius,  
de Bello  
Vandalico,  
i. 2.

We must not do him injustice. He was also religious, after the fashion of his time ; and he found leisure in some of the direst emergencies of his country to put

BOOK I. forth fresh edicts for the suppression of Heresy and  
 CH. 13. Paganism.

It is natural to ask, Why this sudden decay of energy in the Theodosian line? Why in Arcadius and Honorius do we find no trace of the impetuous will of their father? It is possible that the character of the mother may here, as in so many other cases, have been more faithfully reproduced in her sons than the character of the father. For Flaccilla, though a devout and charitable woman, was one whom we hear praised for the sweetness rather than the strength of her nature, and often trembled before the passionate outbursts of her husband's wrath. Thus says Claudian in addressing Serena, the niece and adopted daughter of the Emperor:—

Laus  
 Serenae,  
 134-138.

‘When harassed with the heavy cares of State  
 Home he returned, moody and passionate,  
 When from their angry sire his children fled,  
 And e’en Flaccilla saw his scowl with dread,  
 Then thou alone couldst stem his roaring rage,  
 Alone, with soothing speech, his wrath assuage.’

But probably, after all, the chief cause of the want of energy shown by the sons of Theodosius was the enervating moral atmosphere which surrounded them from childhood. Passing their early years in the sacred recesses of the palace, shut out from contact with the healthy world outside by the purple veil and the brightly clothed *Silentiarii*, hailed in childhood with the great name of Augustus, surrounded by adoring courtiers and listening to flattery as fulsome, but not always as eloquent, as that of Claudian, it is not surprising that these unfortunate lads grew up to manhood flaccid, nerveless, and ignorant, the mere tools of the ministers who governed in their names, and utterly unable to

support, themselves, any of the real weight of the Empire. BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

But let us pass on from Honorius to describe the character and fortunes of the real ruler of the Western world, Stilicho.

Stilicho was born probably between 350 and 360<sup>1</sup>. He was the son of a Vandal chief who had entered the service of the Emperor Valens, and had apparently commanded his squadrons of barbarian auxiliaries in a creditable manner. Had there been any worse stigma than the fact of his Vandal descent attaching to Stilicho's parentage, we should certainly have heard it from his captious critic Orosius; had he by either parent been linked to any noble Roman family, we should have had it impressed upon our recollection by his flatterer Claudian, who, moreover, if his father had been a great general, would certainly not have dropped the hint that 'even though he had wrought no illustrious deed, nor with faithful allegiance to Valens ever guided his chestnut-haired squadrons, it would have been enough for his fame that he was the begetter of Stilicho<sup>2</sup>.'

When the young Vandal, tall<sup>3</sup>, and of stately presence, moved through the streets of Constantinople, the

<sup>1</sup> Claudian (in his poem on the First Consulship of Stilicho) speaks of him as still a young man when married to Serena (apparently about 385). He could not therefore be born earlier than 350. On the other hand, in the *De Bello Getico*, 459-460, Claudian speaks of his 'well-known white hair'—

'Emicuit Stilichonis apex et cognita fulsit  
Cognities.'

He therefore could hardly have been born later than 360, since this poem relates to the events of 402 or 403.

<sup>2</sup> In *Prim. Cons. Stilich. i.* 36-39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 51-70.

BOOK I. crowds on either hand deferentially made way for him.  
 CH. 13.

He was still only a private soldier, but the instinct of the multitude foretold his future advancement. Nor was that advancement long in coming: scarcely had he attained manhood when the Emperor sent him on an embassy to the Persian court<sup>1</sup>. Arrived at Babylon (continues the flattering bard) his proud deportment struck awe into the hearts of the stern nobles of Parthia, while the quiver-bearing multitude thronged eagerly to gaze on the illustrious stranger, and the Persian ladies, smitten by his goodly appearance, nourished in secret the hopeless flame of love. Hopeless,—for a higher alliance than that of any Persian dame was in store for him on his return to Constantinople. There, in the court of her uncle Theodosius, dwelt the learned and dignified Serena. She was the daughter of his brother, the elder Honorius, and was older than any of his own children. In the old days, when they were all dwelling together in Spain, and when Theodosius was still in a private station, he took a fancy to the little maiden, and often carried her back with him from her father's house to cheer his own still childless home. When the elder Honorius died, and Theodosius found himself at the summit of the world, he remembered his old favourite, and summoned her, with her sister Thermantia, to his court. Both were adopted by him as his daughters, but Serena retained the stronger influence over him, and, as we have already seen, ventured to approach and to soothe him in those angrier moments when his gentle Empress dared not face his wrath.

and marriage to  
 Serena.

<sup>1</sup> This embassy was probably in connection with the treaty between the two monarchies solemnly concluded at Constantinople in 384.



Such was the bride whom the Emperor (probably about the year 385) bestowed on the young warrior. Henceforward his promotion was certain. He rose to high rank in the army, being made Magister Utriusque Militiae some years before the death of Theodosius, he distinguished himself in many campaigns against the Visigoths, he avenged the death of his veteran friend Prometus on the barbarians of the Danube, and finally, when his wife Serena had brought her little cousin Honorius to his dying father at Milan, Stilicho received from his sovereign, whom he had no doubt accompanied in his campaign against Arbogast, the guardianship of his son and the regency of the Western Empire. It is also stated, with some probability, that Theodosius on his death-bed gave to this stalwart kinsman a general charge to watch over the safety of the East as well as the West, thus constituting him in some measure guardian of Arcadius as well as of Honorius.

Of the great abilities of Stilicho as a general and a civil administrator there can be no doubt. As to the integrity of his character there is a conflict of testimony. We are met at the outset by the words of Zosimus, who declares that on the death of Theodosius everything was done in the Western and Eastern Empires according to the mere pleasure of these two men, that they took bribes without any pretence of concealment, that large possessions came to be accounted a calamity, since they marked out the owner for the calumnies and false accusations of informers in the minister's service, that through the perversion of justice all manner of wickedness increased in the cities, and that ancient and substantial families were rapidly sunk into penury,

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

Made  
Master  
of the  
Soldiery ;

and Regent  
of the  
West.

Difficulty  
of deciding  
as to  
Stilicho's  
integrity.

Hostile  
testimony  
of Zosimus,  
v. i.

BOOK I. while vast masses of wealth of all descriptions were  
 CH. 13. being accumulated in the dwellings of Rufinus and  
 Stilicho.

In Rufi-  
 num, i.  
 182-195.

His pane-  
 gyric by  
 Claudian.

Claudian, in a fine torrent of angry verse, brings the very same idea of widespread corruption and robbery forcibly before us, but of course with him Rufinus is the only guilty one. Of Stilicho's moral character he draws a flattering picture. His clemency<sup>1</sup> is depicted in twenty-four lines, his truthfulness<sup>2</sup> in twenty. His justice<sup>3</sup>, patience, temperance, prudence, constancy, are more rapidly sketched; but great stress is laid on his utter freedom from avarice<sup>4</sup>, the mother of all the vices, on his firmness in suppressing the too common practice of delation (false and frivolous accusations against the rich for the sake of hush-money), and on his bestowal of the offices of the state on merit alone, irrespective of all other considerations.

With this conflict of testimony before us, and feeling that the prejudices of Zosimus may make his testimony almost as valueless as the venal verses of Claudian, our best course will be to watch the life of the great Vandal for ourselves, and draw our own conclusion at its close.

Animosity  
 between  
 the Eastern  
 and West-  
 ern Em-  
 pires.

One thing is certain, that the animosity existing between Stilicho and the successive ministers of the Eastern Emperor (an animosity which does not necessarily imply any fault on the part of the former) was one most potent cause of the downfall of the Western Empire. In part this was due to the peculiar position of military affairs at the time of the death of Theodosius. The army of the East, the backbone of which was the

<sup>1</sup> In Cons. Stilichonis, ii. 6-29.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. 100-110.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. ii. 30-49.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. 110-124.

Gothic auxiliaries, had just conquered, at the river Frigidus, the army of the West, which similarly depended upon the Frankish and West German soldiery. The two hosts coalesced in devotion to Theodosius; they were perhaps ready to follow the standards of a rising general like Stilicho, but they were in no great haste to march off to wearisome sentinel duty on the frontiers of Persia or Scythia, nor was Stilicho anxious so to scatter them. Hence heart-burnings between him and the Eastern court, and complaints, perhaps well-founded, made by the latter, that he kept all the most able-bodied and warlike soldiers for himself and sent the cripples and good-for-nothing fellows to Constantinople. Whatever the original grievance, for a period of thirteen years (from 395-408) hearty co-operation between the courts of Rome and Constantinople was unknown, and intrigues which it is impossible now to unravel were being woven by the ministers of Arcadius against Honorius, perhaps by Stilicho against them. The Roman Empire was a house divided against itself, and it is therefore no marvel if it was brought to naught.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.  
395.

Zosimus,  
v. 4.

Odious as the character of Rufinus was, it must be admitted in justice to him that his position was a difficult one. He was expected to administer the Eastern Empire for the obviously incapable Arcadius, but the chief forces of that Empire were under the command of his avowed enemy, Stilicho, who also put forward a claim of indefinite magnitude to joint or superior guardianship of the helpless sovereign. To make his situation still more difficult, he was at this time foiled by a yet more artful villain than himself in a palace intrigue. Rufinus proposed to himself to

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

395.

marry his daughter to Arcadius, but during his temporary absence from the capital, the Eunuch Eutropius (the same man whom Theodosius had despatched on a mission to the hermit John before his last campaign) contrived to bring under his young master's notice the picture of a young Frankish maiden of surpassing beauty. This was Eudoxia, the daughter of the late Count Bauto, who had been brought up in the house of Promotus, and who had among her foster-brothers and sisters doubtless imbibed undying enmity to the crafty minister who had contrived the death of that veteran. In the feeble soul of Arcadius the flame of love was easily kindled, and he gladly gave command (during a temporary absence of the terrible guardian) that the fair Frankish maiden should be won. Eutropius bade the people make holiday and deck their houses for an Imperial wedding. He set forth with his attendants bearing the Imperial crown, the bright robes of an Imperial bride; and with dance and song the festive procession moved through the streets of Constantinople. All men expected that the chamberlain would proceed to the house of Rufinus, whose ambitious designs were well known. But no; the attendants moved on to the humbler abode of Promotus, brought forth from thence Eudoxia in all her radiant Northern beauty, and led her to the palace, where for the next nine years she reigned supreme. Rufinus on his return to Constantinople found that his position was undermined, and that henceforward he would have a covert rival at Constantinople besides the avowed rival at Milan.

27 April,  
395.

Birth and  
early his-  
tory of  
Alaric.

The third name on our list is Alaric, the great Visigothic chieftain whose genius taught him the best means of turning the estrangement between the two



Empires to account. Alaric was sprung from one of those royal or semi-royal houses which, among the German nations, proudly traced back their lineage to the gods of Walhalla. His family, the Balthi, ranked, some said, only second in nobility to the Amals; and when Alaric in after-days had performed some of his daring deeds against the great world-Empire, men said, remembering the meaning of the name of his forefathers, 'Rightly is he called Baltha (Bold), for he is indeed the boldest of mankind<sup>1</sup>.' As for the year of his birth we have no certain information. It may have been any time between 360 and 370, but can hardly have been much earlier than the first or much later than the second date. His birthplace was the island Peuce, in the Delta of the Danube, apparently south of what is now termed the Sulina mouth of that river. We have already met with him crossing the Alps as a leader of auxiliaries in the army of Theodosius, when that Emperor marched to encounter Eugenius and Arbogast. With the accession of the two young Princes the spell of the Theodosian name over the barbarian mind was broken. The ill-timed parsimony of Rufinus, perhaps of Stilicho also, curtailed the largesses hitherto given to the Gothic troops<sup>2</sup>, and thus yet further estranged them from the Empire. Then individual grievances were not wanting to their general. He was still only a leader of barbarian auxiliaries, bound to difficult and little-honoured labour on the

<sup>1</sup> This is Köpke's explanation (*Anfänge des Königthums*, p. 122) of the difficult passage in Jordanes, 'Alarico, cui erat post Amalos secunda nobilitas Balthorumque ex genere origo mirifica, qui dudum ob audaciam virtutis, Baltha, id est audax, nomen inter suos acceperat.'

<sup>2</sup> Jordanes, *De Rebus Geticis*, cap. 29.



BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

395.

wings of the Imperial armies, though Theodosius had led him to believe that if the campaign against Eugenius prospered he would be promoted to high military office in the regular army, and thus earn the right to command Roman legionaries in the centre of the line of battle<sup>1</sup>. And already perhaps in the very outset of his career he felt that mysterious, irresistible impulse, urging him onwards to Rome<sup>2</sup>, which fourteen years after he spoke of to the Italian monk who had almost succeeded by his intercessions in inducing him to turn back from the yet uncaptured city.

But however varied the causes might be, the effect is clear. From the day when Alaric was accepted as leader of the Gothic people their policy changed, or rather they began to have a policy, which they had never had before. No longer now satisfied to serve as the mere auxiliary of Rome, Alaric adopted the maxim which he himself had probably heard from the lips of Priulf just before his murder by Fravitta, that the Goths had fought Rome's battles long enough, and that the time was now come for them to fight their own. And though the career which he was thus entering upon was one of wide-wasting war and invasion, it would be a mistake to think of the young king as a mere barbarian marauder. Knowing the Roman court and army well, and despising them as heartily, educated in the Christian faith, proud of the willing allegiance of a nation of warriors, fated to destroy, yet not loving the work of mere destruction, Alaric, and the kings of the Visigoths who followed him, are in fact knights-errant who rear the standard of chivalry—with its errors as well as its noble

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Sozomen, ix. 6.

thoughts—in the level waste of the Orientalised despotism and effete civilisation of the Roman Empire. BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

Such then was the chief whom the Visigothic warriors, in accordance with the usages of their forefathers, raised upon the buckler and held aloft in the sight of all men as their newly-chosen king. The actual date of this election is uncertain<sup>1</sup>, but it is much the most probable conjecture that it occurred in 395, immediately after the death of Theodosius, and was consequent upon the change of policy adopted by the ministers of his sons. 395.  
Alaric  
made King  
of the  
Visigoths.

If the date is not quite clear, the purpose of this election is not clouded by any doubt. As Jordanes says, ‘After Theodosius, that lover of peace and of the Gothic nation, had departed this life, and when his sons, living luxuriously, began to annihilate both Empires<sup>2</sup>, and to filch from their auxiliaries, I mean the Goths, their accustomed gifts, soon the Goths conceived an increasing dislike for those princes; and fearing lest their own valour should be relaxed by a long peace, they ordained over themselves a King, named Alaric.... Presently then the aforesaid Alaric, being created King, and entering into deliberation with his people, persuaded them to seek kingdoms for themselves by their own labours rather than quietly to lie down in subjection to others, and therefore gathering together an army he marched against the Empire<sup>3</sup>.’ Little as

<sup>1</sup> Clinton, following Isidore (an inaccurate guide), decides on 382: Gibbon argues, not very convincingly, for 400.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Utramque rempublicam.’

<sup>3</sup> *Getica*, xxix. Jordanes, who knows nothing of the Grecian campaigns, proceeds at once to Alaric’s invasion of Italy in 400. This is the only pretext for postponing Alaric’s elevation to that year.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

395.  
What consequences flowed from that kingship.

they knew what they were doing, the flaxen-haired barbarians who in the Illyrian plains raised amid shouts of *Thiudans, Thiudans* ('the king! the king!') the shield upon which Alaric stood erect, were in fact upheaving into reality the stately monarchy of Spain, with her Pelayos and San Fernandos, her Alonsos and Conquistadors, her Ferdinand and Isabella, with Columbus landing at Guanahani, and Vasco Nunez wading knee-deep into the new-found ocean of the Pacific to take possession of its waves and shores for Spain. All these sights, and, alas, also her Inquisition, her Autos-da-fé, her wrecked Armada, the impotence and bankruptcy of Iberia in these latter days, might have passed before the unsealed eyes of a seer, had there been such an one among those Gothic warriors, for all these things were to spring from that day's decision.

His expeditions into Greece.

Thus then the spring of 395 was a time of terror and dismay to the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire. While the savage Huns, passing through the Caucasian Gates, laid waste the provinces of the Empire on the Upper Euphrates, and even appeared in sight of the walls of Antioch, Alaric with his Visigothic followers, in the first fervour of the enthusiasm of revolt, ravaged Moesia and Thrace, and carried consternation to the environs of Constantinople. Induced by some means or other to turn his face southward, he departed from these old battle-fields of his race, penetrated Thessaly, passed the unguarded defile of Thermopylae, and, according to the story of Zosimus (coloured of course by his heathen prejudices), 'having gathered all his troops round the sacred city of Athens, Alaric was about to proceed to the assault. When lo! he beheld

Athene Promachus, just as she is represented in her statues, clothed in full armour, going round about the walls thereof, and Achilles standing upon the battlements, with that aspect of divine rage and thirst for battle which Homer ascribes to him when he heard of the death of Patroclus. Awe-struck at the sight Alaric desisted from his warlike enterprise, signalled for truce, and concluded a treaty with the Athenians. After which he entered the city in peaceful guise with a few of his followers, was hospitably entertained by the chief inhabitants, received presents from them, and departed, leaving both Athens and Attica untouched by the ravages of war.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

395.

He did not turn homewards, however, but penetrated into Peloponnesus, where Corinth, Argos, and Sparta all fell before him.

The precise details of these campaigns are difficult to recover, and lie beyond our present horizon. What is important for us is their bearing on the relations between the two ministers Stilicho and Rufinus. The latter is accused of having actually invited Alaric to invade his master's dominions, or, at any rate, of having smoothed Alaric's passage into Greece in order to remove him from his too menacing neighbourhood to Constantinople. He was jealous of the overshadowing power of Stilicho, he was too conscious of his own intense unpopularity with all classes; even the dumb loyalty of his master was beginning to fail him. The beautiful barbarian Empress was now putting forth all her arts to mould the plastic soul of her husband into hostility to his chief minister. Surrounded by so many dangers Rufinus perhaps conceived the desperate idea of playing off one barbarian against another, of

The double  
game of  
Rufinus.



saving himself from the Vandal Stilicho by means of Alaric the Goth. We can only say 'perhaps,' because we hear of these events only from men who were bitter enemies of the minister and who wrote after his fall, and because some of the misdeeds imputed to him look more like the acts of a bewildered and panic-stricken man than like the skilful moves of a cunning traitor. Suspicion was aroused by the fact that in all the wide-wasting raids of the soldiers of Alaric the vast estates of Rufinus in Moesia and Thrace were ostentatiously spared; but it might be part of the Visigoth's plan to arouse that very suspicion. Rufinus paid a visit to the camp of the barbarian to endeavour to bring him back to his old loyalty to the Empire, and in that visit, to the grief and indignation of the Byzantines, he even affected a certain barbaresque fashion in his own costume, changed the flowing toga, which became the Roman magistrate, for the tight leathern garments of the Teutons, and carried the large bow and displayed the heavy, perhaps silver-mounted, bridle which distinguished the auxiliaries from the legions. But this again was not necessarily a proof of disaffection to the Empire. It might be only a clumsy imitation by an upstart civilian of the arts by which the great soldier Theodosius had won the love of his barbarian *foederati*. It is probable enough that Rufinus may at this interview have suggested to Alaric the policy of withdrawing from before the strong defences of Constantinople and gratifying his barbarians with the spoil of the yet unwasted provinces of Greece. A base and cowardly expedient certainly; but we need not perhaps believe the accusation of Zosimus that he actually committed the government of Greece to the dissolute Musonius,



the defence of Thermopylae to the treacherous Geron-  
tius, in order to ensure the success of Alaric's invasion.  
When a man is so universally hated as was the grasping  
Rufinus, his very blunders and weaknesses are easily  
interpreted as evidence of yet more and deeper wicked-  
ness.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

395.

To Stilicho an appeal was naturally addressed to  
bring or to send the Eastern army to the defence of the  
Eastern Empire. He came: it was still early spring<sup>1</sup>,  
for events had moved rapidly since the death of Theo-  
dosius. He had under his command a mighty host  
collected from various provinces of the Empire, some  
of whose legions had fought under Arbogast, some  
under his conqueror, on the great day of the battle  
of the Frigidus, but all were now welded together into  
one body by their enthusiastic confidence in their great  
leader, Stilicho, and all were eager for the fray.

Stilicho  
marches  
against  
Alaric, but  
is ordered  
by Ar-  
cadius to  
withdraw

The Imperial army had come up with the Visigoths  
at some unnamed place within the confines of Thessaly.  
Alaric recalled his marauding squadrons, gathered all his  
forces into one plain, surrounded the herds of cattle  
which he had collected with a double fosse and a  
rampart of stakes. All men in both armies knew that  
a great battle was impending, a battle which, as we  
the after-comers can see, might well have changed the  
course of history. Suddenly letters arrived from Con-  
stantinople, subscribed by the hand of Arcadius, com-  
manding Stilicho to desist from further prosecution of  
the war, to withdraw the legions of Honorius within  
the limits of the Western Empire, and to send the  
other half of the army straight to Constantinople.  
This infatuated decree, which can only be explained by

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, *In Rufinum*, ii. 101.

BOOK I. the supposition that Arcadius had really been persuaded  
 CH. 13. of the disloyalty of Stilicho, and feared the rebel more  
 395. than the barbarian, had been wrung from the Emperor  
 by the cajolery and menaces of Rufinus.

Stilicho obeyed at once, notwithstanding the earnest dissuasions of the soldiers, with a promptness which must surely be allowed to count heavily in proof of his loyalty to the Theodosian line, and his reluctance to weaken the commonwealth by civil war. The army of the whole Roman Empire had appeared for the last time in one common camp<sup>1</sup>; the Western portion set off for Italy, the Eastern for Constantinople. With deep resentment in their hearts the latter passed through Thessaly and Macedon, revolving silently a scheme of revenge which, if it passed from the domain of thought into that of uttered words, was faithfully kept from all outside, an army's secret<sup>2</sup>.

Revenge of  
 the army  
 on Rufinus.

27 Nov.

On their return to Constantinople, Rufinus, who deemed himself now secure from Stilicho's hatred, and who had extorted a promise from Arcadius that he should be associated with him in the sovereignty, caused coins to be struck with his effigy, and prepared a liberal donative for the troops in commemoration of his accession to the Empire. In a plain near the capital the greedy minister and the helpless sovereign proceeded to review the troops. Rufinus, who already practised the condescending suppleness of an imperial bow, addressed individual soldiers by name, informed them of the health of their wives and families, and appropriated to himself the cheers which were meant for the son of

<sup>1</sup> Possibly an exception should be made for the joint campaign of East and West against Carthage in 468.

<sup>2</sup> 'Et fuit arcanum populo.' Claudian, *In Ruf. ii.* 290.

Theodosius. While this was going on, and while, on the high platform on which he and Arcadius stood, he could be seen plucking the Emperor by the mantle, beseeching, almost commanding him, to fulfil his promise, and at once declare him co-emperor, the army in the meantime was spreading out both its wings, not to protect but to destroy, and enclosed the imperial platform in a narrower and ever-narrower circle. At length Rufinus raised his head, and saw everywhere around him the lowering faces of his foes. One moment of awakening he had from his fond dream of Empire, and then a soldier stepped forth from the ranks, and with the words, 'With this sword Stilicho strikes thee,' plunged the weapon into his heart.

Then as many as were able to do so clustered round the corpse, hacked it to pieces, carried off the limbs in triumph, sowed them over the fields as the Maenads sowed the fragments of the flesh of Pentheus, but fixed the head on a spear, where they made it practise its newly learned lesson of condescending salutation, and carried round through the city the dead hand and arm, with grim ingenuity making the fingers uncloset and close again upon imaginary wealth, and crying out, 'Give, give to the insatiate one.'

There is no doubt that the minister had made himself thoroughly hateful to both the people and the army, but we need not accept too literally the statement (taken from Claudian) that the murder was entirely planned by the soldiery. The general under whose command they marched back to Constantinople was Gainas the Goth, a friend of Stilicho's. Zosimus states that Gainas gave the signal for the murder, and had arranged the whole pageant of the review for this

The deed was probably instigated by Gainas.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

395.

express object, a statement which we can easily believe when we find that for the next five or six years the chief power over the feeble soul of Arcadius was divided between three persons, his fair Frankish Empress Eudoxia, Eutropius, the haggard old eunuch who had placed her on the throne, and Gainas the Goth, commander of the Eastern army.

Campaign  
of 396.

In the following year Stilicho made a rapid march—rather a journey than a campaign—to the banks of the Rhine, and may have thus succeeded in confirming the wavering loyalty of some Frankish and Alamannic chiefs<sup>1</sup>. Then, with some of his Western legions, he crossed the Adriatic and again appeared on its Eastern shore, this time in the Peloponnesus, as the champion of the Empire against the Visigoths. We must suppose that for a time the tremors of Arcadius had been soothed by his new ministers, and that he was willing that his realm should be delivered by Stilicho. The outset of the campaign was successful. The greater part of Peloponnesus was cleared of the invader, who was shut up in the rugged mountain country on the confines of Elis and Arcadia. The Roman army expected soon to behold him forced by famine to an ignominious surrender, when they discovered that he had pierced the lines of circumvallation at an unguarded point, and marched with all his plunder northwards to Epirus. What was the cause of this unlooked-for issue of the struggle? ‘The disgraceful carelessness of

<sup>1</sup> We can only speak in these doubtful terms of a movement of which we know nothing but what is told us in a few vague lines of Claudian (*De IV Cons. Honorii*, 439–460). This Rhenish march is generally assigned to the year 395, but it seems to me that the only time in which we can find room for it is the first half of 396.

Stilicho,' says Zosimus. 'He was wasting his time with harlots and buffoons when he should have been keeping close watch on the enemy.' 'Treason,' hints Orosius. 'Orders from Constantinople, where a treaty had been concluded with Alaric,' half suggests Claudian, but he does not tell the story as if he himself believed it. The most probable explanation of this and of some similar passages in Stilicho's subsequent career is that Fabian caution co-operated with the instinct of the *Condottiere* against pushing his foe too hard. There was always danger for Rome in driving Alaric to desperation: there was danger privately for Stilicho if the dead Alaric should render him no longer indispensable.

Whatever might be the cause, Stilicho returned to Italy, and henceforward he interferes no more with the armed hand in the affairs of the Eastern Empire. Left alone with the Visigothic King, the ministers of Arcadius soon concluded one of those treaties (*foedera*) of which the history of the Eastern Empire is full. With almost sublime cowardice they rewarded the Grecian raids of Alaric by clothing him with the sacred character of an officer of the Empire in their portion of Illyricum. The precise title under which he exercised jurisdiction is not stated<sup>1</sup>, but the scope of his powers and his manner of wielding them are thus described by Claudian—

'He who, unpunished, laid Achaia waste  
And smote Epirus, foremost now is placed

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon's 'Master-General of Illyricum' is, I think, only a conjecture, though a very probable one. The last extract from Claudian on the next page looks as if the title were Duke, perhaps 'Dux Daciae Ripensis et Moesiae Primae.'



BOOK I.  
CH. 13.  
396.

In all the Illyrian land<sup>1</sup>. Each city's gate  
Greets the new friend, the armed destroyer late:  
And in law's name he sways the trembling crew  
Whose wives he ravished, and whose sons he slew<sup>2</sup>.'

And again<sup>3</sup>, where Alaric is supposed to be himself rehearsing the matter to his followers—

'Our race, of old, by its own strength prevailed,  
When still it fought unweaponed and unmailed;  
But now, since Rome gave rights into my hand,  
And owned me Duke of the Illyrian land,  
How many a spear and sword and helmet fair  
Did not I make the Thracian's toil prepare,  
And, bidding Law my lawless purpose crown,  
Took iron tribute from each Roman town<sup>4</sup>.  
So Fate was with me. So the Emperor gave  
The very race I plundered as my slave.  
The hapless citizens, with many a groan,  
Furnished the arms for havock all their own:  
And in the flame, o'erwatched by tears and toil,  
The steel grew red, its craftsman's home to spoil.'

From what has been before said, it will be understood that these last expressions of the poet must not be interpreted literally. It was not the inhabitants of Illyricum itself against whom the collected arms of Alaric were to be used. But, taking the Roman Empire as a whole, the statement is true enough that during an interval of quiescence, which lasted apparently about four years, the Visigothic King was using the forms of Roman law, the machinery of Roman

<sup>1</sup> 'Praesidet Illyrico.'

<sup>2</sup> In Eutropium, ii. 214-218.

<sup>3</sup> De Bello Getico, 533-543.

<sup>4</sup> 'At nunc Illyrici postquam mihi tradita jura  
Meque suum fecere ducem, tot tela, tot enses,  
Tot galeas multo Thracum sudore paravi;  
Inque meos usus vectigal vertere ferri  
Oppida legitimo jussu Romana coegi,' &c.

taxation, the almost unbounded authority of a Roman provincial governor, to prepare the weapon which was one day to pierce the heart of Rome herself.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

396.

The precise geographical position occupied by Alaric while 'presiding over Illyricum' is not more clear than his exact official rank in the Notitia, but we may conjecture that he was in the extreme west of that portion of Illyricum which obeyed Arcadius, that is in the regions which we now know as Bosnia and Servia. For a chief who nourished the vast designs which were now ripening in his soul, the position was an alluring one. Both Empires in their weakness lay before him. He could either make his way through those Julian Alps over whose passes he had followed Theodosius to victory and so descend upon Italy, or by the southern bank of the Danube he could march down to the old Moesian battlefields and so descend upon Constantinople. Hovering thus on the frontiers both of Honorius and Arcadius he, in the words of Claudian,—

*'Sold his alternate oaths to either throne<sup>1</sup>.'*

But as he remembered the long years of purposeless battle which his predecessors had waged with the East and how they had ever dashed themselves in vain against the impregnable battlements of Constantinople, his thoughts evidently turned more and more towards the West, and already, we may believe, a prophetic voice began to whisper to his soul—

*'Penetrabis ad Urbem.'*

*'Thou shalt pierce to the very City of cities, to Rome herself.'*

<sup>1</sup>

*'Foedera fallax*

*Ludit et alternae perjuriam venditat aulae.'*

*De Bello Getico, 566-7.*

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

The dependence of Rome upon Africa for her food-supply.

Not yet however was the Imperial City immediately threatened with war: but she was already suffering from famine, and famine brought upon her by an ignoble foe, Gildo the Moor. For centuries, as the rural element in the population of Italy had grown weak and the urban element had grown strong, the dependence of Rome for her food-supply upon foreign lands, and especially on the great grain-producing countries which lined the southern shore of the Mediterranean, had become more absolute and complete. In fact, the condition of Rome, from the point of view of a political economist, was during the whole period of the Emperors as unsatisfactory as can well be imagined. She had long passed (nor is that surprising) out of the self-sufficing stage, in which she produced within her own territory all the necessaries of life for her citizens. But then, having devoted herself so exclusively to the arts of war and the science of politics, she was not producing any mercantile equivalent for the food which she needed. Her sole manufacture, we may almost say, was the Roman legionary, her chief exports armies and praetors; and in return for these, through the taxation which they levied, she imported not only the ten thousand vanities and luxuries which were consumed by her wealthy nobles, but also the vast stores of grain which were distributed by the Caesar, as a Terrestrial Providence, among the ever-increasing, ever-hungrier swarms of needy idlers who represented the *Plebs Romana*.

The corn of Egypt diverted to Constantinople.

Since the foundation of Constantinople, the area of supply had been diminished by one-half; Egypt had ceased to nourish the elder Rome. No longer now, as in the days of a certain Jewish prisoner who appealed

to Nero, would a Roman centurion easily find in Lycia BOOK I.  
CH. 13. 'a ship of Alexandria' with a cargo of wheat 'about to sail for Italy.' Ships from that port now preferred the Acts xxvii.  
6. nearer and safer voyage through the land-locked Archipelago, and discharged their cargoes at Constantinople.

Rome was thus reduced to an almost exclusive dependence on the harvests of Africa proper (that province of which Carthage was the capital), of Numidia, and of Mauretania, whose corn-growing capacities must not be measured by the scanty dimensions to which they have now dwindled under centuries of Mohammedan misrule. But this supply, ever since the death of Theodosius, had been in a precarious condition; and in the year 397 was entirely stopped by the orders of Gildo, who had made himself virtual master of these three provinces.

It has been before stated<sup>1</sup> that the war which the Gildo the Moor. elder Theodosius brought to a successful issue in Africa in the year 374 was waged with a certain Mauretanian rebel named Firmus. The son of a great sheep-farmer, Nabal<sup>2</sup>, he had left behind him several brothers, one of whom, Gildo, had in the year 386 gathered up again some portion of his brother's broken power<sup>3</sup>. We find him, seven years later (in 393), holding the rank of Count of Africa in the Roman official hierarchy. Probably the troubles in the house of Valentinian II had enabled him, though a doubtful friend to the Empire, to force himself into this position. While the great His doubtful loyalty in 394,

<sup>1</sup> p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Will Punic influence justify us in coupling this Semitic-sounding name with the churlish Nabal of the Bible?

<sup>3</sup> In the year 398 Africa complains, according to Claudian (*De Bello Gildonico*, 153), that she has been for twelve years subject to the tyranny of Gildo.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

duel between Theodosius and Arbogast was proceeding, he held aloof from the contest, rendering indeed a nominal allegiance to the former, but refusing to send the men or the ships which he called for. Had not the death of Theodosius followed so promptly upon his victory, men said<sup>1</sup> that he would have avenged this insincere adhesion, worse than open enmity, upon the Count of Africa, in a way which would have recalled the early days of Roman history, when Tullus Hostilius tied the dictator of Alba, Mettius Fuffetius, to chariots driven in opposite directions, and so tore asunder the body of him whose mind had wavered between loyalty and treason.

397.

and open  
rebellion  
in 397.

But the great Emperor having died in his prime, Gildo's day of punishment was deferred. Nay, more, he turned to his own account the perennial jealousy existing between the ministers of the Eastern and Western Courts, renounced his allegiance to Rome, and preferred to transfer it to Constantinople. What brought matters to a crisis was his refusal to allow the grain crops of 397 to be conveyed to Rome. Our often-quoted poet represents the Mistress of the World calling, in the agony of hunger, upon Jove, 'not now with her wonted look of pride; not with that commanding mien with which she dictates her laws to Britain or lays her *fusces* upon trembling India. No, but with weak voice and tardy steps and eyes dimmed of their lustre, with hollow cheeks and thin hunger-wasted arms that scarce could upbear the shield; her unloosed helmet showed her whitened hair, and she trailed her rusted spear feebly behind her.' Then, in the bitterness of her soul, she addressed the Thunderer, telling him that her con-

De Bello  
Gildonico,  
19-25;

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, De Bello Gildonico, 254-5.



quest of Carthage had been in vain if Gildo, a meaner and more odious Hannibal, was to lord it over Africa. BOOK I.  
CH. 13.  
'Even the magnitude of my Empire oppresses me. Oh! for the happy days when Veii and the Sabines were my only foes. Oh! that I could return to the old limits and the walls of good King Ancus. Then the harvests of Etruria and Campania, the acres which the Curii and Cincinnatus ploughed and sowed would be sufficient for my need.' The return to these narrow limits, which he introduces as a mere flower of poetry, was nearer than the poet thought. 397.  
105-111.

The Roman Senate declared war in the early winter months of 398 against Gildo. Stilicho, who, of course, undertook the fitting out of the expedition, found a suitable instrument for Rome's chastisement in one who had had cruel wrongs of his own to avenge upon Gildo. This was yet another son of Nabal, Mascezel, 398.  
The Gildonic war. who, not favouring his brother's ambitious schemes, had withdrawn to Italy. To punish this defection Gildo had caused his two sons to be slain, and their bodies to be left unburied. Now at the head of a Roman armament consisting of six legions<sup>1</sup>, (which ought to have numbered 36,600 men,) Mascezel set forth. Mascezel.

Claudian brings vividly before us the embarkation from the harbour of Pisa, which the shouts of the soldiers and the bustle of the armament filled, even as Agamemnon's warriors made Aulis echo when they were assembling for the war against Troy. Then we see the fleet set forth: they leave the Riviera on their right, they give a wide berth to Corsica, they reach The armament despatched from Pisa.

<sup>1</sup> The Jovian, Herculean, Nervian, Felix, Augustan, and 'the Leones' (Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico*, 415-424).

BOOK I. Sardinia, and land at Cagliari, where they wait for  
CH. 13. favouring zephyrs.

398.  
The monks  
of Caprera.

Here, unfortunately, our mythological poet breaks off, and we are handed over to the very different guidance of the devout but foolish Orosius. He describes how Mascezel, having learned from Theodosius the efficacy of prayer, made sail for the island of Capraria<sup>1</sup>, and there took on board certain holy servants of God (monks) with whom he spent the following days in prayers, fastings, and the recitation of psalms, and thus earned a victory without war, and revenge without the guilt of murder.

Defeat and  
death of  
Gildo.

For when they reached a river which seems to have been the frontier between Numidia and the province of Carthage, and when he found that on the opposite side the enemy, 60,000 strong, were drawn up prepared to join battle with his inferior numbers, in the night that holy man, Ambrose of Milan, then lately deceased, appeared to him in a vision, and striking the ground thrice with his staff said, 'Here, here, here.' The prophecy was clear: that place was to be the scene of the victory, which they were to achieve on the third day. After waiting the appointed time, and passing the third night in prayers, the singing of hymns, and the celebration of the Sacrament, they moved onward and met their foes with pious words. A standard-bearer of the enemy pressed insolently forward. He was wounded in the arm, the standard fell, the distant cohorts thought that Gildo had given the signal for surrender, and came in by troops to give themselves up to Mascezel. The Count of Africa fled, escaped on ship-board, was pursued, brought back to land, put to

<sup>1</sup> Garibaldi's Caprera.

death (some say <sup>1</sup> he committed suicide); but all this was done by others, so that the hands and the conscience of Mascezel were clear from his brother's blood, and yet he had the revenge for which he longed. The scene of Gildo's death was Tabraca, a little town still existing under the name Tabarca, on the frontiers of Tunis and Algiers.

And thus the provinces of Africa were for the time won back again for the Empire of the West, and Rome had her corn again <sup>2</sup>.

The fate of Mascezel, the re-vindicator of Africa, is an enigma. The version given by Zosimus is that generally accepted. He says <sup>3</sup>, that he returned in triumph to Italy; that Stilicho, who was secretly envious of his reputation, professed an earnest desire to advance his interests; but that when the Vandal was going forth to a suburb (probably of Milan), as he was crossing over a certain bridge, with Mascezel and others in his train, at a given signal the guards crowded round the African and hustled him off into the river below. 'Thereat Stilicho laughed, but the stream hurrying the man away, caused him to perish for lack of breath.'

Death of  
Mascezel  
attributed  
to Stilicho.

Orosius, however, makes no mention of all this. In his narrative, which is written with a bias towards religious edification, Mascezel, in the hour of his

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. II.

<sup>2</sup> The patrimony of Gildo, perhaps representing that of the whole house of Nabal, was confiscated to the use of the state, that is of the Emperor, and was so extensive that in the *Notitia Occidentis*, cap. xi, the 'Count of the Patrimony of Gildo' is placed in the first class of officials subject to the Administrator of the Imperial Domains ('Comes Rerum Privatarum'). Compare also *Cod. Theod.* vii. 8 (*De Metatis*) 7 and 9.

<sup>3</sup> v. II.

BOOK I. triumph, is described as neglecting the society of the  
 CH. 13. holy men whom he had taken on board at Caprera, and  
 398. even daring to violate the sanctity of the churches by  
 laying hands on some of the rebels who had taken  
 refuge there. 'The penalty for this sacrilege followed  
 in due course, for after some time he himself was  
 punished under the very eyes and amid the exulting  
 cries of those whom he had thus sought to slay. Thus  
 when he hoped in God he was assisted, and when he  
 despised Him he was put to death.'

This does not seem to describe the same scene as the  
 tumultuary assassination of which Zosimus speaks. As  
 Orosius hates Stilicho, and omits no opportunity of  
 insinuating calumnies against him, his silence appears  
 to outweigh the hostile testimony of Zosimus, who  
 generally leans to the side of detraction. Possibly the  
 Roman ministers who had seen Firmus rise again in  
 Gildo may have feared that Gildo would rise again in  
 Mascezel, and may have determined by fair means or  
 foul to crush the viper's brood of the house of Nabal;  
 but such a crime, committed for reasons of state, how-  
 ever foul a thing in itself, is different from the assassi-  
 nation prompted by mere personal envy, which has  
 been on insufficient grounds attributed to the Vandal  
 hero.

Marriage  
 of Hono-  
 rius to  
 Maria  
 daughter  
 of Stilicho.

The glory and power of Stilicho were now nearly at  
 their highest point. Shortly before the expedition  
 against Gildo he had given his daughter Maria in  
 marriage to Honorius, and the father-in-law of the  
 Emperor might rightly be deemed to hold power with  
 a securer grasp than his mere chief minister. In the  
 poem on the nuptials of Honorius and Maria, a poem in  
 which the mythological element—Cupid, Venus, the

Nereids, and the like—is more than usually prominent, Claudian seems perplexed to know which he is to praise the most—the Emperor, the bride, or the bride's father. He settles at length, however, on Stilicho, even daring to say—

‘More of our duty e'en our prince hath won  
Since thou, unconquered captain, call'st him son!’

And to this quarter of the compass, during the remaining six years over which his poems extend, the needle of his Muse's devotion pointed faithfully. He tells us, and one is disposed to believe that the flattery is not wholly baseless, that when Stilicho trod the streets of Rome there was no need of any herald to announce his advent<sup>2</sup>. Even when surrounded by the throng of citizens, his lofty stature, his demeanour, stately yet modest, his voice, accustomed to command, yet free from the loud arrogance of the mere military swash-buckler; above all, his capacious forehead and his hair, touched with an early whiteness by the cares of state, and suggesting the gravity of age combined with the vigour of youth, all proclaimed his presence to the people; all forced the by-stander to exclaim, ‘*Hic est, hic Stilichon.*’ (‘This, this can be none else than Stilicho.’)

In the same poem, Claudian indulges in anticipations of the birth of a little ‘Honoriables,’ who should climb the knees of his grandfather<sup>3</sup>, an anticipation, however, which was not realised. There was no issue of the marriage, and though there can be no doubt that the

<sup>1</sup> ‘Plus jam, plus domino cuncti debere fatemur  
Quod gener est, invicte tuus.’

De Nupt. Honor. et Mariae, 335–6.

<sup>2</sup> De Nupt. Honor. et Mariae, 318–325.

<sup>3</sup> De Nupt. Honor. et Mariae, 340–1.



BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

398-9.

birth of an Imperial grandson would have, more than anything else, consolidated the power of Stilicho, even this failure of issue was, at a later day, attributed to the magical arts of Serena and included in the indictment against her too prosperous family.

Consulship  
of Eutro-  
pius and  
Theodorus.

The years 399 and 400 were memorable ones in the Consular Fasti. For the first of these years, Eutropius, the chamberlain and ruling favourite at the Court of Constantinople, was nominated Consul on behalf of the East, while Mallius Theodorus, a Roman of respectable rank and character, was the colleague given him by the West. For though the Consul's titular dignity was connected properly with Old Rome alone, this divided nomination between the two portions of the Empire seems to have been usual, if not universal.

Degrada-  
tion of the  
consulship.

Slaves and freedmen, even of the degraded class of eunuchs to which Eutropius belonged, had before now, under weak Emperors, and especially under Constantius, exercised great power in the state, but it had been always by keeping themselves in the background and working upon the suspicions or vanity of their lord. But that a slave who had sunk lower and lower in the menial ranks as he passed from one master to another till he at length received his freedom as the contumelious prize of his age and ugliness, that an old and wrinkled eunuch, who had combed the hair of his mistress and fanned her with peacocks' feathers, should sit in the chair of Brutus, be preceded by the lictors with the fasces, and affect to command the armies of Rome, was too much for the still remaining pride of the *Senatus Populus Que Romanus*. The populace of Constantinople only laughed at the effeminate voice and faded prettinesses of the Eunuch-Consul, but the

Western Capital refused to defile her annals with his name, and wrote down Mallius Theodorus as sole Consul. By a not unnatural blunder, in after years the blank space was filled up by the division of the Western magistrate's name, and the year 399 (A.U.C. 1152) was assigned to 'Mallius *et* Theodorus, Consules.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

399.

In the following year (400) Stilicho himself was raised to the Consulship. The promotion seems to have come somewhat tardily to one whose power and whose services were so transcendent, but there was perhaps a reluctance to confer this peculiarly Roman office on one so recently sprung from a barbarian stock<sup>1</sup>. Claudian's muse was roused by this exaltation of his patron to some of her finest efforts. In the trilogy of poems celebrating the first Consulship of Stilicho<sup>2</sup>, the enthusiastic bard furnishes us with many of those details as to the youth and early manhood of the General, which have been already quoted: he describes how he had by the mere terror of his name brought Germany into such a state of subjection and civilisation, that the perplexed traveller sailing down the Rhine was fain to ask himself which was indeed the German, which the Roman shore; he celebrates the civic virtues of his hero, and he closes with a rapturous description of the sports in the amphitheatre which were to celebrate the joyful event, and for which Diana and all her nymphs with glad willingness purveyed the needful animals.

400.  
Consulship  
of Stilicho.

From amidst the prophecies of future glory and

Claudian's  
congratu-  
latory  
prophecy.

<sup>1</sup> Yet that this cannot have been the only reason is sufficiently shown by the examples of Bauto, Merobaudes, and Dagalaiphus.

<sup>2</sup> The so-called poem on the Second Consulship evidently bears an erroneous title, and really belongs to the First.

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

400.  
De consu-  
latu Stili-  
chonis II,  
424-476.

victory, which are, as it were, a common form in such compositions, one may be selected which concludes the second poem. The personifications are doubtless less vivid than those of the great Epic Poets, and some of the images are perhaps blurred in the original, and must be yet more so in a translation. Still, as one of the latest mythological pictures in Roman art, and as a forecast of the future of the Empire, delivered at the very commencement of the fifth century (according to our reckoning), the passage may be found not devoid of interest—

The Cave  
of Time.

‘Far off, in some wild spot, unknown of men,  
Scarce to be traced by e’en Immortals’ ken,  
Yawns the vast Cave, dark mother of the years,  
Forth from whose depths each new-born time appears,  
Whither it hastes, when ended. All the place  
Is girdled by a serpent’s coiled embrace :  
For ever fresh each green and glittering scale,  
And the jaws close upon the back-bent tail,  
End and beginning one. Before the Gates  
Primeval Nature, stately guardian, waits,  
And all around her, as in act to fly,  
Hang the swift souls, soon to be born or die.

Time.

Meanwhile a man, of venerable age,  
Writes Fate’s firm verdicts on his opened page.  
He tells the stars, he knows their devious way,  
The secret cause of every orb’s delay,  
And the fixed laws which death and life obey.  
He knows what prompts the mazy dance of Mars,  
The Thunderer’s steadfast course among the stars,  
The Moon’s swift orbit, Saturn’s sluggish pace,  
Why Venus, Mercury, haunt Sol’s resting-place.

The Sun  
enters upon  
the new  
year.

Soon as that threshold feels the Sun-god’s feet,  
The mighty Mother runs his steps to greet.  
That ancient mage, before the sunbeam’s glare,  
Bends all the snow-white honours of his hair,  
And then, self-moved, the adamantine doors  
Turn backwards; gleam upon the spacious floors

The conquering rays; Time's mysteries old and new,  
In Time's own realm, lie open to the view.

Here, each apportioned to its separate cell,  
By various metals marked, the ages dwell.  
Here are the brazen years, a crowded line,  
Here the stern iron, there the silvern shine.  
Oh! safely guarded, rare for earth to hold,  
Lie the great boons, the ruddy years of gold.  
Of these the Titan chooses the most fair,  
The noble form of Stilicho to wear,  
Bids all the rest to follow, and as they fly  
Salutes them thus, and tells their destiny.

“Lo! he, for whom the better age so long  
Has tarried, comes, a Consul. Oh ye throng  
Of years that men have yearned for, haste amain  
And all the Virtues carry in your train.  
Once more from you let mighty minds be born,  
The joy of Bacchus, Ceres' wealth of corn.  
Let not the starry Serpent, by the Pole,  
Hiss forth the icy breath that chills the soul:  
Nor with immoderate cold let Ursa rage,  
With heat the Lion; Cancer's heritage  
Let not the fury of the summer burn,  
Nor let Aquarius, of the lavish urn,  
Wash out the seeds from earth with lashing showers.  
Let Phrixus' Ram lead in the spring with flowers,  
But not the Scorpion's hail the olives bruise,  
Nor Virgin! thou the autumnal germs refuse  
Kindly to foster. Dog-star! let the vine  
Grape-crowned, not hear too loud that bark of thine.”  
He said and sought the saffron-flaming fields  
And his own vale, which circles and enshields  
A fiery stream. There in a deep-grown glade,  
Where feed his deathless steeds, his steps he stayed,  
Bound with the fragrant flowers his amber hair,  
The manes and bridles of his coursers fair—  
Here served him Lucifer, Aurora there—  
And with them smiling, stood the Year of Gold,  
Proud on his brow the Consul's name to hold.  
Then on its hinge the gate is backward rolled,  
And the stars write the Stilichonian name  
On Rome's eternal calendars of fame.’

BOOK I.  
CH. 13.

400.  
A Golden  
Age al-  
lotted to  
Stilicho by  
the sun.

## NOTE G. ON THE NAME ALARIC.

NOTE G. Alaric = *Ala-Reiks*. As to the termination *Reiks* there is no difficulty. Allied apparently to the Latin *rex*, it is the regular equivalent of *prince* or *ruler* in Ulfilas's translation of the Bible, e. g. John xii. 31, 'Nu sa *reiks* this fairwaus usvairpada ut'— 'Now is the *prince* of this world cast out.' Matt. ix. 18, '*Reiks* ains qimands invait ina qithands thatei dauhtar meina nu gasvalt'— 'A certain *ruler* coming worshipped him saying that my daughter is now dead.' Eph. ii. 2, 'Bi *reik* valdufnjis luftaus'— 'according to the *prince* of the power of the air.' Romans xiii. 3, 'Thai auk *reiks* ni sind agis godamma vaurstva ak ubilamma'— 'For *rulers* are not a terror to good work but to evil.' The Gothic equivalent of *King* is *Thiudans*.

This *Reiks* is of course the final *ric* in the Vandal Genserik and Hunnerik, the Frankish Chilperik, the Ostrogoth Theodoric, the Spanish Roderik, and the English Leofric.

The first part of the name, *Ala*, is perhaps not quite so clear, as *alle* (all) in Gothic is generally spelt with two l's both in its simple form or in its compounds; but we do find *Ala*-mans= 'all-men,' 'mankind,' and *Ala*-tharba, 'utterly destitute,' in the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke xv. 15. (See the Gothic Lexicon in Gabelenz and Löbe's Ulfilas.)

The surname Baltha is, without dispute, the Gothic equivalent for 'bold,' thus John vii. 13, 'Nih than ainshun svethauh *baltha-ba* rodida bi ina in agisis Iudaie'— 'But not any-one however, *boldly* spoke (thus) concerning him from fear of the Jews.' It is apparently the same word which appears in our English name Æthelbald (probably also in the German Willibald and the Italian Garibaldi).



## NOTE H. ON THE DIVISION OF ILLYRICUM.

The division of the Empire between East and West on the NOTE H. accession of the sons of Theodosius, though it was possibly meant to be less complete than some preceding partitions<sup>1</sup>, proved to be the final one. It is worth while to indicate the line of division, which is sufficiently accurately traced for us in the Notitia. In Africa it was the well-known frontier marked by 'the Altars of the Philaeni,' which separated Libya (or Cyrenaica) on the East from Africa Tripolitana on the West. Modern geographers draw exactly the same line (about 19° E. of Greenwich) as the boundary of Barca and Tripoli.

On the Northern shore of the Mediterranean the matter is a little more complicated. Noricum, Pannonia, Savia, and Dalmatia belonged to the West, and Dacia—not the original but the later province of Dacia—to the East. This gives us for the frontier of the Western Empire the Danube as far as Belgrade, and on the Adriatic the modern town of Scutari. The inland frontier is traced by geographers some 60 miles up the Save from Belgrade, then southwards by the Drina to its source, and so across the mountains to Scutari. Thus Sclavonia, Croatia, and Dalmatia in the Austrian Empire, and Croatia, most of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro in the state which was lately called Turkey in Europe, belonged to the Western Empire. The later province of Dacia, which fell to the Eastern share, included Servia (Old and New), the south-east corner of Bosnia, the north of Albania, and the west of Bulgaria. By this partition the *Prefecture* of Illyricum, as constituted by Diocletian, was divided into two nearly equal

<sup>1</sup> 'Archadius et Honorius germani utrumque imperium *divisis tantum sedibus* tenere coeperunt.' Marcellini Chronicon, s. a. 395. Marcellinus, however, is by no means a contemporary authority, having written in the middle of the sixth century.

NOTE H. parts. The north-western half, which we may call, speaking roughly, the Austrian (including Austria's recent acquisitions in the direction of Bosnia), was given to Rome, while the south-eastern, or the Turkish and Greek half, fell to the dominion of Constantinople.

What makes the subject somewhat perplexing to the student is the tendency to confuse Illyricum the *province* and Illyricum the *prefecture*. The former was nearly identical with the province afterwards called Dalmatia (Modern Dalmatia + Bosnia + Herzegovina), and was allotted almost in its entirety to the Western Empire. The latter reached, as we have seen, from the Danube to Cape Matapan. It is of this that historians are thinking when, in describing the territorial changes of this period, they speak of Eastern and Western Illyricum.

Some modern writers have represented that this division of Illyricum was a grievance which Old Rome had against New at the close of the fourth century. Tillemont (*Histoire des Empereurs*, v. 157) has shown that the division was made by Gratian at the time of the accession of Theodosius. It is nowhere, I believe, mentioned by contemporary historians as a cause of quarrel, and in fact, looking back to the Diocletianic scheme of division, it would rather seem as if the East were entitled to complain at not having the whole of the Prefecture of Illyricum than the West at having to relinquish a part.

It seems clear from Jordanes (*Getica* li and lii) that at the time of the three Ostrogothic brother-kings (452-474) both Pannonia and Illyricum (which apparently here = Dalmatia) belonged to the Eastern Empire. But under Theodoric they are Western again. Our information as to all these changes is still far from complete.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ARCADIUS.

### Authorities.

#### *Sources :—*

OUR chief sources are ZOSIMUS and the ecclesiastical historians, but we have also one contemporary authority of peculiar interest in the letters and speeches of SYNESIUS of Cyrene, whose visit to Constantinople is alluded to in the following chapter. Synesius was born about 370, of ancient family—he traced his descent from the Heracleidae, the mythical founders of Cyrene—and he studied philosophy at Athens and Alexandria. His sojourn in Constantinople appears to have lasted from 397 to 400. After his return to Africa he became a convert to Christianity, of a very broad and eclectic type, and about the year 409 in deference to the earnest request of his fellow-citizens he accepted the office of Bishop of Ptolemais, though fully conscious how little he, the jovial sportsman and *litterateur*, conformed to the conventional standard of holiness required in a father of the Church. He will probably be always best known by the kindly, and on the whole faithful, picture of him contained in Kingsley's 'Hypatia.'

Besides the oration on Kingship, Synesius wrote a treatise called 'the Egyptians or concerning Providence,' in which under allegorical disguise some of the chief events connected with the revolt of Gainas are related. Aurelian is spoken of as Osiris, the principle of good : under the name Typhos, the principle of evil, some leader of the opposite party, said to have been Aurelian's brother, is designated. The whole subject is very obscure, and till 'Typhos' can be identified, it seems to me hardly wise to try to interweave this strange parable with authentic history.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

Separation  
between  
Eastern  
and  
Western  
Empires.

HITHERTO the course of events has compelled us often to linger by the shores of the Euxine and the Propontis. The barbarians whose fortunes we have been following have rarely lost sight of the Danube. The great Emperor who tamed them has ruled the world from Constantinople. Henceforward it will be our duty to concentrate our attention on the affairs of Western Europe and only to attend to the history of the Eastern Empire, in so far as it may be absolutely necessary to enable us to understand the history of the West. For however true it may be that Theodosius intended to make no permanent division of the Empire, when on his death-bed at Milan he left the East to Arcadius and the West to Honorius, it is not less true that that division, towards which the stream of destiny had long been tending, did practically result from the arrangements then made by him, from the weakness of his sons and from the mutual and envenomed hatred of their ministers. The process of division began in 330, when Constantine dedicated his new capital by the Bosphorus. It ended in 800, when the people of Rome shouted 'Life and Victory to Carolus Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific Emperor of the Romans.' But if we must connect one date more than another with a process which was thus going forward for nearly half a millennium, undoubtedly that date will be 395, the year of the death of Theodosius.

Recognising this fact, I shall only sketch in brief outline the thirteen years of the reign of Arcadius. We have seen that this prince, nominally lord of half the civilised world, really a man of such feeble and sluggish temperament as to be always the slave of

some more powerful character near him, had passed, after the murder of Rufinus, under the dominion of three joint-rulers,—Eutropius the Eunuch, Eudoxia the daughter of a Frankish warrior, and Gainas the Goth. How these three may have divided their power we know not; doubtless there were rivalries and jealousies between them, but for five years they seemed to have pulled the strings of the Imperial puppet in apparent harmony. During this time Eutropius, ‘Superintendent of the Sacred Bedchamber,’ was the chief figure in the administration of the Empire. He raised up his friends and cast down his enemies. Hosius, once a servant in the kitchen of Theodosius, became Master of the Offices, and Leo, a big swashbuckler soldier, who had once been a wool-comber, and whose chief glory was that he could drink more goblets of wine than any other man in the camp, was made, at a crisis of the fortunes of the State, *Magister Militum per Orientem*<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the old general, Abundantius, who had formerly been one of the many masters of the despised and elderly Eunuch, and who, by introducing him to the Court, had laid the foundations of his future greatness, had to atone for too vividly recalling to the upstart Minister the memories of past degradation. He was banished to Pityus, at the eastern end of the Black Sea, under the roots of Caucasus, where only the charity of the barbarians prevented him from perishing with hunger. Timasius, the old general of Theodosius, who had been threatened with the anger of Rufinus<sup>2</sup>, fell before the yet deadlier

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.  
395.  
Eutropius  
the  
Eunuch.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently. I am not sure that the precise title is anywhere mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 541.



BOOK I. enmity of Eutropius. An unworthy confidant of the  
CH. 14. general's, Bargus the sausage-seller, was persuaded to  
396. accuse his patron of treasonable designs upon the  
throne; forged letters were adduced in support of the  
charge: Timasius was condemned and banished to the  
great Oasis in the Libyan desert in the west of Egypt.  
His son, Syagrius, sought to deliver him from that  
terrible place of exile, surrounded with vast wilder-  
nesses in which no creature could live: and it was  
said that he had hired a band of robbers to assist him  
in his pious design, but whether he failed to com-  
municate with his father, whether the sand of the  
desert swallowed up both father and son, or whether  
both escaped and lingered out inglorious lives among  
the savage tribes of the Soudan, was never ascertained.  
Enough that both Timasius and Bargus vanished from  
the eyes of men.

The pampered menial who could make his anger thus  
terrible to his foes was of course soon surrounded by a  
crowd of sycophants. Ignoble natures always pros-  
trate themselves before the possessor of power, and  
the same kind of persons who now grovel before  
a democracy then vied with each other for the honour  
of shaking the hand of the Eunuch, clasped his knees,  
kissed his wrinkled cheeks, and hailed him as 'De-  
fender of the Laws' and 'Father of the Emperor.'  
Statues were erected to him in all the chief cities of  
the East. In some he was represented as a judge clad  
in solemn toga: in others he was a mailed horseman:  
and the inscriptions on the bases of the statues dared  
to talk of his noble birth (though men were still living  
who had bought and sold him as a slave), to declare  
that he, the Chamberlain, had fought great battles and

won them without others' help, or to call him the 'third founder of the City of Constantinople.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

Meanwhile, Eutropius was accumulating vast stores of wealth. The greater part of the confiscated property of Rufinus found its way into his hands; and as it soon became manifest that his word was all-powerful with Arcadius in the selection of governors of the provinces, he was able to coin this influence into gold, and according to Claudian's account of the matter, actually set up a kind of domestic mart at which prefectures and governorships were openly sold to the highest bidder. 'All the lands between Tigris and the Balkans are put to sale by this hucksterer of Empire. One man sells his villa for the government of Asia; another with his wife's jewels purchases Syria; a third thinks he has bought Bithynia too dear at the sacrifice of the home of his fathers. A tariff fixed on the Eunuch's door distinguishes the price of the various nations; so many sesterces for Galatia, so many for Pontus, so many for Lydia. If you wish to rule Lycia, pay down so many thousands.

Sale of  
Offices.

Claudian.  
In Eutro-  
pium I,  
196-206.

"For Phrygia you must pay me something more."

'Tis thus he bargains. He, oft sold before,  
Now fain would sell us all, and branded see  
Upon our brows his mark of infamy.'

One good deed and memorable in the history of the Christian Church marked the administration of Eutropius. On the death of Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, long and fierce debates arose as to the choice of his successor. Eutropius, who with all his vices was not wanting in penetration and insight into character, appears to have suggested the name of John Chrysostom, to whose eloquent discourses he had listened

John  
Chrysos-  
tom,  
Bishop of  
Constanti-  
nople.  
397.

BOOK I. during a recent visit to Antioch. The suggestion  
 CH. 14. pleased both clergy and people; the golden-mouthed  
 397. preacher was unanimously elected to the vacant see. An order was sent to Asterius, Count of the East, who, according to the somewhat high-handed fashion usual in those days in dealing with bishops-elect, captured the unwilling preacher, delivered him to the Imperial officers, and sent him in honourable custody to the city, with which his name was thenceforward to be for ever associated.

Aurelian  
 and the  
 patriotic  
 Roman  
 party.

The degrading yoke of the Eunuch-chamberlain was not borne without a murmur by the nobles of Constantinople. There was a party, headed by the high-souled and cultivated Aurelian, which dared to protest with increasing boldness against the ascendancy of court-lackeys within the palace, and Gothic soldiers without. To this party Synesius of Cyrene attached himself. He had come, a young man of about twenty-seven, on a mission from his native city to offer a golden wreath to the Emperor and to obtain some remission of the crushing taxation under which the Cyrenaic province was groaning. For more than a year he had been in vain pleading for an audience with the Emperor. The covetous Eunuch, who had no desire to see the quotations of provincial governorships lowered by any alleviation of their burdens, kept the doors of the palace fast closed against him. At length, however, the opportunity of Synesius came. It was the year 399, the year when the *Fasti* were soiled by the disgraceful Consulship of Eutropius; but it was also the year in which, by some means unknown to us, Aurelian obtained the commanding position of Praetorian Prefect. From this high vantage-ground he

was able effectually to help the young orator, and thus it was that, apparently in the beginning of the year, Synesius, admitted into the palace, delivered before Arcadius his celebrated oration 'on Kingship.'

BOOK I.

CH. 14.

399.

It was a striking scene: the young and eloquent deputy from Cyrene standing up in the midst of that brilliant assemblage to lecture the short, sallow, sleepy-eyed young man, who was hailed as Lord of the Universe, on the duties of his office<sup>1</sup>. If Synesius really uttered half the bold and noble words which appear in his published oration, it is a marvel that he was not at once arrested on a charge of *laesa majestas*; but while, on the one hand, he may well have added weight to his sentences at a later day in the secure seclusion of Cyrene, on the other hand, it was safe to presume on the lethargy of the lectured Emperor. Where Theodosius would have been listening with flushed face and on the point of bursting forth in a passion of uncontrollable rage, the heavy-eyed Arcadius yawned and wondered how soon the oration of the young deputy from Cyrene would be ended.

The ora-  
tion of  
Synesius  
'on King-  
ship.'

'The Emperor,' said the young orator, 'ought to know the faces of his soldiers, to endear himself to them by sharing their hardships and their dangers, to make himself acquainted with the wants and grievances of his subjects by visiting the provinces in person. The great Caesars of Rome lived in the open air, feared

<sup>1</sup> We get from Philostorgius (Eccl. Hist. xi. 3) these particulars. 'Arcadius was short of stature and weak in frame. His personal strength was slight and his complexion dark. His slothful temper showed itself in his speech and in the blinking of his eyes, which were generally closed as if in slumber and were kept open with an effort.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

399.

not to expose themselves to the noontide sun and to the winter's wind, lived under tents, were seen by the peasant and the legionary. The notion that the sovereign should shut himself up in his palace, beheld only by adoring courtiers, surrounded by tall, fair-haired guards, with golden shields and golden lances, perfumed with essences and odours, this seclusion and idolatry of the Emperor is a custom borrowed from the barbarians and if persisted in will ruin the Republic, whose fortune even now hangs, as it were, on a razor's edge. For while the Emperor is shutting himself up in his palace, living the life of a polypus, occupying himself only with the pleasures of the table or with the buffooneries of low comedians, the barbarians are pressing into our armies, urging every day more audacious claims, yea, have already kindled rebellion in some provinces of the Empire. Their chiefs, raised to high military command, are taking their seats in the Senate. They wear the Roman toga, condescending so far to our usages when they are figuring as officers of the State, but as soon as they re-enter their dwellings they hasten to throw off the civic gown, declaring that it hinders the drawing of the sword. The true patriot Emperor will find this to be his first task, cautiously, but firmly, to weed out the barbarians from his army, and make that army what it once was, Roman.'

The patriotic oration of Synesius awoke no echo in the soul of Arcadius, but it was contemporaneous with and may possibly have been in part the cause of certain events which made the year 399 memorable in the history of the Eastern Empire<sup>1</sup>. Eutropius the venal

<sup>1</sup> Guldenpenning's plausible suggestion that the appeal to the old



chamberlain, Eudoxia the Frankish empress, and Gainas the Gothic general, had, as we have seen, for some years been helping one another to misgovern the Empire; but in 399, the year of Eutropius' consulship, this disastrous coalition was dissolved, chiefly, it would seem, by the overweening arrogance and insatiable rapacity of the Eunuch-Consul, but also partly by the inherent tendency of all coalitions which are founded merely on a selfish desire to appropriate the honours and emoluments of the State, to break down sooner or later under the warring ambitions of their members.

Early in the year tidings came to Constantinople of untoward events in the inland province of Phrygia. A colony of Greuthungi, who had been settled there probably after the great victory which Promotus gained over their invading hordes<sup>1</sup>, had broken out into open revolt, and were marching hither and thither, entering and plundering at their will the wealthy cities, whose mouldering walls and unrepaired battlements bore witness to the deep peace which had long reigned in the provinces of Asia. The leader of the insurrection was Tribigild the Ostrogoth, a kinsman of Gainas, who, though he had attained the rank of a Count, complained that his services as a captain of *foederati* had not been rewarded with the promotion which they deserved.

When these tidings reached the Imperial Court, Eutropius at first affected to treat them with indifference. 'A little band of malefactors,' said he, 'is wandering about in Phrygia. They need the scourge

Roman spirit symbolised by this oration was the cause of the barbarian uprising, seems to me to some extent refuted by the fact that Synesius speaks of 'conflagrations *already* kindled.'

<sup>1</sup> See p. 323.

BOOK I.  
Ch. 14.  
399.

Rebellion  
of Count  
Tribigild.  
386.

Leo's dis-  
astrous  
campaign.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

399.

of the lictor, not the darts of the soldier, to repress their outrages.' But this ostrich-like policy of ignoring the danger of the Empire availed not long. When it had obviously failed, Eutropius affected a new and martial ardour, and men saw with amused wonder the elderly slave donning the terrible habiliments of war, and trying to utter the words of command in his thin and quavering falsetto. But it was needful to appoint generals for the war; and while the defence of Europe was entrusted to Gainas, Leo, the burly but incapable favourite of Eutropius, had the Asiatic campaign entrusted to his care. His troops, already demoralised by too long enjoyment of the pleasures of the town, gained nothing from the leadership of such a man. There was no proper vigilance on the march; the sentinels were not properly posted on the ramparts of the camp; at length there came a night when the whole army was surprised in its drunken slumber. Some were killed in their sleep; of the fugitives many were soon floundering in a morass which bordered the camp. Among these last was Leo himself, who certainly perished, though we need not take as literally true the poet's statement that he died of terror—

'Leo himself, more timid than the deer,  
Springs on his steed, with teeth that chatter fear:  
The horse perspiring 'neath that mighty mass,  
Soon falls and struggles in the swift morass.

Then shrieked the general: lo! the gentle wind  
Brought down a shower of shaken leaves behind.  
Each leaf, to Leo's terror, seemed a dart,  
And terror struck, like javelins, to his heart.  
With skin untouched, and hurt by fear alone,  
He breathed his guilty life out with a groan<sup>1</sup>'

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, In Eutropium ii. 440-444, 452-455.

It may possibly have been the failure of the general, who was Eutropius' favourite, and the knowledge of the unpopularity which he had thus incurred, that emboldened his two former allies, but present enemies, to declare themselves against him. Gainas, like Tribigild, was dissatisfied with his share in the plunder of an Empire, and probably contrasted enviously the rewards given to Alaric with his own. Eudoxia had long fretted under the Eunuch's arrogance, and had been forced—so men said—to hear from him the insulting words, 'Beware, oh lady! The hand which raised thee to the throne can easily pull thee down from thence.' It was Eudoxia who dealt the fatal blow to the Eunuch's power. She suddenly appeared before the Emperor, holding her little two-year-old daughter Flaccilla by the hand, and with her baby, Pulcheria, in her arms, to complain of the insolence of Eutropius. She stretched forth her children and wept: the children wept also; and Arcadius, goaded into energy by their mingled cries, at once gave orders for the fall of the detested Minister.

When he saw that his position in the Palace was undermined, Eutropius at once gave up the game. He knew that he had countless enemies, he doubted if he had one faithful friend, and his own heart gave him no counsels of courage or of hope. He fled to the great church of St. Sophia, and there at the altar sought an asylum from his foes. He himself in the days of his power had grudged this last refuge to Pentadia, the widow of his victim Timasius, and had caused a law to be passed, removing, or at least abridging, the right of asylum in the churches. Now, however, the church, with splendid magnanimity, threw her aegis over her

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

399.  
Fall of  
Eutropius.

Eutropius  
seeks  
refuge  
in the  
great  
Church.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

399.

fallen foe. When Chrysostom entered the Cathedral he found Eutropius, in sordid garb, his thin grey hairs covered with dust, clinging in an agony of terror to 'the table of refuge.' The soldiers soon appeared and demanded the surrender of the fugitive, but Chrysostom boldly told them that they should penetrate into the sanctuary only over his dead body, since, living, he would never betray the honour of the Church, the Bride of Christ. A day passed in negotiations between the Cathedral and the Palace. The mob in the Hippodrome, the troops before the royal dwelling, shouted for the head of the fallen Minister; but Chrysostom remained firm, and Arcadius, yielding to the ascendancy of that noble nature, besought the soldiers with tears not to violate the sanctity of the altar.

'Vanity of  
vanities.'

The next day was Sunday, and the proudest day in the life of the golden-mouthed orator. A vast crowd of men and women flocked to the Cathedral, and when Chrysostom mounted the pulpit, the curtain between the nave and the chancel was drawn aside, and all the throng beheld the Superintendent of the Sacred Bed-chamber, the Consul who gave his name to the year, the lately omnipotent Eutropius, lying prostrate in over-mastering fear under the Holy Table. The Bishop chose his text from 'the Preacher' of a date earlier by fourteen centuries, 'Vanity of vanities: all is vanity.' In eloquent words he described the pomps and revels, the troops of flatterers and the gay garlands which had once made up this man's felicity, contrasting them with the forlorn condition of the wretch who was weeping and trembling under the altar. Eutropius himself probably cared little what the Bishop said, so long as he did not surrender him to the terrible *Silentiarius*,

who was chafing and fuming outside ; but there were many who thought the preacher's eloquence ill-timed, and that there was something ungenerous in delivering a sermon which was in fact a bitter invective against a foe so utterly fallen <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.  
399.

Before many days had passed, Eutropius came forth from his asylum, induced, it was said, by a promise that his life should be spared. His goods were confiscated, the consular annals were 'vindicated from the foul taint and muddy defilement brought upon them by the mention of his name.' His statues, in brass and marble, were pulled down 'that this infamy of our age may no longer pollute our vision<sup>2</sup>,' and he was banished under strict custody to the island of Cyprus. Even thence, however, he was recalled. Gainas, now his open enemy, clamoured for his head, declaring that his kinsman Tribigild would never be reconciled so long as Eutropius remained alive. Eudoxia probably urged her shrill entreaties on the same side. There remained the difficulty of the Imperial promise, perhaps the Imperial oath, that the culprit's life should be spared : but a way was found out of this difficulty. It was alleged that the promise had been that he should not be killed at Constantinople, and he was therefore brought back only as far as Chalcedon, the fair Asiatic city which rose opposite to Constantinople, and there the Eunuch met his doom.

Banishment and death of Eutropius.

After the fall of Eutropius the history of the rebellion of Tribigild and Gainas becomes more and more unintelligible and obscure. Tribigild, instead of pushing westward and overrunning the opulent plains of Lydia

Obscure movements of Tribigild.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, vi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cod. Theod. ix. 40, 17.



BOOK I.  
Ch. 14.

399.

Gainas in  
open re-  
bellion.

(which, Zosimus thinks, he might successfully have accomplished), wasted his strength in border warfare with the strongly-posted dwellers in mountainous Pisidia. Then, accompanied only by the remnants of his army, he made his way across the Hellespont into Thrace, and there soon afterwards perished<sup>1</sup>. Gainas at first played the part of candid friend to the Empire, recommending the concession of one point after another to Tribigild, in order to soothe his resentment, and secretly encouraging the desertions of the *foederati* under his command to the rebel standard; but when the reverses of Tribigild made this part impossible, he threw off the mask and stood revealed as the real author of the rebellion. At his request Arcadius consented to meet him in conference at the church of St. Euphemia, outside the gates of Chalcedon. His principal demand was for the surrender of three men who were the chiefs of the 'Roman' or national party within the city, and whose surrender, as he expected, would give his partisans a predominant influence in the State. These three men were Saturninus, the consul for 383, whose successful negotiations with the Goths seventeen years ago, had given the *foederati* their present position of vantage in the army: Aurelian, the consul-designate for 400 (colleague of Stilicho in that office); and Joannes, a friend, some said a favoured lover, of the Empress. Even Arcadius seems to have recoiled from the baseness of giving up these men to the barbarian; but Aurelian and Saturninus came forward of their own accord, and with something of the old Roman spirit voluntarily offered themselves for the good of their country. Gainas was touched by their patriotic devo-

<sup>1</sup> Philostorgius, xi. 8.

tion; perhaps Chrysostom added his intercession: at any rate, the Goth was content to insult them with his clemency. They were led out as if to death: the executioner brandished his drawn sword; but when the blade had touched the skin of their necks they were told that their lives were spared, but their possessions confiscated, and that they might go forth into poverty and exile.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

399

The result of the interview between Gainas and the Emperor seems to have been the complete ascendancy of the Gothic party in Constantinople. 'The city was altogether barbarised' is the expressive sentence of a historian<sup>1</sup>, 'and all who dwelt in it were treated after the manner of captives. So great was the danger impending over the city, that a very large comet was visible in the heavens. But as some counterpoise to the terror of the comet, tall and fair angels in the guise of heavy-armed soldiers stood round the palace one night, and terrified the barbarians into the abandonment of their design to set it on fire.

Arrogance  
of the  
Goths.

Up to the time of his overthrow of Eutropius, Gainas had shown both courage and resource, but now success made him languid and weak of will<sup>2</sup>. Like so many another barbarian leader, when he had the Roman Empire at his feet, he did not know whether he himself wished to destroy or to preserve it. He loudly demanded the cession of one church in the city to his Arian co-religionists; but under the scathing invective of Chrysostom, who reminded him that he had come as

Irresolu-  
tion of  
Gainas.

<sup>1</sup> Joannes Antiochenus, fr. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Ὑγρότερος ὑπὸ τοῦ κατορθώματος καὶ μαλακώτερος γενόμενος. ὥς ἂν ᾗδη τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἀρχὴν συνηρηκῶς καὶ τοῖς ποσὶν ἐπεμβαίνων αὐτῇ, μαλακώτερος ᾗν ἀμφαφάσθαι.—Eunapius, fr. 75. 6. (Ap. Müller.)

BOOK I. a fugitive and an outcast into the great Roman republic,  
(H. 14.  
399-400. and had solemnly sworn to Theodosius that he would  
yield true obedience to its laws, he flinched from that  
request. Then he thought of making a raid on the  
shops of the silversmiths, but the shopkeepers got wind  
of his design, and locked up their tempting wares. The  
angelic guards (whoever they may have been) frustrated  
his design of setting fire to the palace. At length he  
flung out of the city, in a fever of vexation and rage  
with himself and everyone about him<sup>1</sup>, giving out that  
he was possessed with a demon, and would go to wor-  
ship at the Church of St. John the Apostle, seven miles  
outside Constantinople.

Outbreak  
of popular  
fury  
against the  
Goths.

12 July,  
400.

Apparently when he left the city it was with some  
design of returning and besieging it in regular form,  
while his attack was to be seconded by his partisans  
within the walls; but this design, if it were ever  
clearly thought out, was frustrated by a conflict which  
suddenly arose between the Goths in Constantinople  
and the citizens. The uncomprehended jabberings of  
an old beggar woman at one of the gates, her harsh  
treatment by a Gothic soldier, and the championship of  
the poor old creature by a brave Roman, were the  
sparks which kindled this flame of war. The citizens  
who had long been chafing under the arrogant de-  
meanour of the *foederati*, fought bravely, arming them-  
selves in part with the weapons of their dead foes; and  
in that age, before the invention of gunpowder, a vast  
and resolute multitude could probably always prevail in  
street-fighting over a comparatively small number even

<sup>1</sup> This is how I read the mental state of this strange barbarian,  
but I am going here a little beyond the strict letter of the authori-  
ties.

of disciplined troops. At any rate, so it was that the fortune of war went against the Goths (at last reduced to a troop of 7000<sup>1</sup> men), who retired, slowly and in fighting order, to 'the Gothic Church,' which was near the Imperial palace. The excited crowd wrung from Arcadius by their clamours leave to disregard the sanctity of the Gothic asylum. The church was partially unroofed, and burning firebrands, hurled down among its wooden seats, kindled a flame in which the Gothic remnant perished.

The sudden popular fury had delivered the capital of the East from the only serious risk which it ran of capture by the Goths. Gainas, who was now declared a public enemy by the Senate, withdrew with his army to the Northern shore of the Hellespont. Fravitta, the brave and loyal heathen Goth, whom we last met with, engaged in deadly debate with Eriulph on the question whether to observe or to break their oaths of fidelity to Theodosius<sup>1</sup>, was appointed as Imperial general. This man, though broken in health, was still full of courage and skill in war. He cooped up the enemy in the wasted Thracian Chersonnese, and when at length Gainas was compelled by hunger to attempt on rafts the passage of the Hellespont, Fravitta, with his swift and brazen-beaked Liburnian galleys, dealt such destruction to the frail flotilla that Gainas found himself practically left without an army. He fled to the shores of the Danube where Uldis the Hun found him wandering with few followers, and, thinking to earn the favour of the Emperor, surrounded his little army, and after many skirmishes, slew him fighting bravely. The head of Gainas, sent as a present to Arcadius, caused

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.  
400.

Gainas  
out-man-  
œuvred  
by Fra-  
vitta.

Death of  
Gainas.

<sup>1</sup> p. 331.

BOOK I. great joy to the citizens of Constantinople, and was the  
 CH. 14. seal of a new *foedus* between the Empire and the  
 400. Huns.

Fravitta's  
 reward.

As for Fravitta, when he returned to Constantinople, though some sagacious critics censured him for too languid a pursuit of the foe, the Emperor received him with all honour, decorated him with the Consulship, and asked him to name his own reward for such signal services. 'That I may be allowed to serve God after the manner of my forefathers,' was the reply of the honest and simple-minded heathen<sup>1</sup>.

401.

The failure of Gainas in his attempt to make himself master of the New Rome deserves to be remembered when we find ourselves spectators of the success of Alaric in his similar enterprise against the Old Rome. It suggests also a question whether it was on the whole a gain or a loss to the world that Constantinople was not taken by a Teutonic chief and did not become the seat of a German monarchy. On the one side is the immense gain to civilisation implied in the preservation of the treasures of Greek literature and science for more than 1000 years after the victory of Fravitta. On the other is the possibility that a Teutonic monarchy by the Bosphorus might have poured fresh life and vigour into the exhausted nations of the East, might have saved Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt from the flood of Arab invasion, perhaps might, by changing the conditions of

<sup>1</sup> I am somewhat perplexed as to the religion of Fravitta. Zosimus' statement that he was 'a barbarian by race but Greek in his worship of the gods' certainly implies that he worshipped the deities of Olympus. But Eunapius, in the conversation quoted above (fr. 82), makes him ask for leave *κατὰ τὸν πάτριον νόμον ἱερατεύειν θεῶν*. This must surely point to a worship of the gods of Walhalla.



human society, have prevented the uprising of the  
 Empire of Islam.

BOOK I.  
 CH. 14.

The remainder of the reign of Arcadius was chiefly occupied with the dissensions which led to the deposition and banishment of Chrysostom. That well-known page of ecclesiastical history must be very briefly written here. We may notice, however, the fact that in the earlier and happier years of the great preacher's episcopate he seems to have devoted himself with much success to the conversion of the Goths. A church at Constantinople was especially set apart for religious services in the Gothic tongue. Priests, deacons, and readers acquainted with that language were ordained to minister to the barbarians, and Chrysostom himself frequently appeared in the pulpit of the church and addressed them by the aid of an interpreter. Missionaries were sent by him to some of the wandering tribes, possibly Goths, possibly Huns, who, 'dwelling by the banks of the Danube, thirsted for the waters of salvation;' and he wrote to the Bishop of Angora, urging him to undertake the conversion (doubtless the conversion from Arianism to Orthodoxy) of the 'Scythians,' by whom we must probably understand the Ostrogoths settled in Central Asia Minor.

Chrysostom's missionary efforts among the Goths.

But both the virtues and the failings of the golden-mouthed preacher conspired to effect his downfall. He was too holy, too apostolic a man to fill acceptably an episcopal throne in the Constantinople of the fifth century. In his denunciations of the foppery and extravagance of the male and female dandies of Constantinople he showed a vehemence, sometimes, we must confess, a pettiness of criticism which, while it of course exasperated the objects of his invective, may

Chrysostom's unpopularity with a section of the inhabitants of Constantinople.

BOOK I. have been felt by his more sober-minded hearers to be  
CH. 14. — scarcely worthy of the dignity of his great office<sup>1</sup>.

Before many years had passed, the Bishop had arrayed against him all the gaily-dressed and fashionable ladies of Constantinople with the Empress at their head, many of the nobles, and not a few of his own clergy, and of the monks in the capital who chafed under the strictness of his discipline, so different from the lax government of his easy-tempered predecessor. All these smouldering embers were blown into a flame by Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who had favoured the election of another candidate to the vacant see and in whom ecclesiastical Alexandria's jealousy of ecclesiastical Constantinople found its most violent and unscrupulous representative. A council was held under the presidency of Theophilus outside of Chalcedon (the 'Synod of the Oak'), at which on the most paltry charges and with an utter disregard of canonical order, Chrysostom was deposed from his see, chiefly by the votes of the Egyptian bishops, ignorant partisans of Theophilus. Chrysostom appealed from the decision of the Synod to a lawful general council; but now came the opportunity of the temporal power, guided by that hot-blooded Frankish lady, Eudoxia. Believing that the Bishop had in one of his sermons covertly alluded to her as Jezebel, she caused her submissive husband to issue a rescript ratifying the sentence of deposition and ordering that the deposed prelate should be banished. After a touching farewell to his flock,

The Synod  
of the Oak.

403.

Banish-  
ment

<sup>1</sup> Take for instance his tirade against the practice of putting silk threads into the boots of the wealthy, quoted by Stephens from Hom. xviii. on Genesis.

Chrysostom gave himself up to the Imperial officers, and was hurried across the Bosphorus into Bithynia.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

But if the golden-mouthed prelate had bitter enemies in Constantinople he had also many enthusiastic friends. The crowds which had flocked to hear him preach in the great basilica, which had applauded his denunciations of the follies of the rich, and had been consoled by his cheering words when the city was threatened by the fierce hosts of Gainas, saw now with anger and fear the pulpit empty of its greatest ornament. An earthquake which happened shortly after the banishment of the Bishop increased the general uneasiness. There was a tumultuous uprising in the capital, which caused Theophilus to return in all haste to Alexandria. The Court-party felt that they had gone too far. Arcadius signed the order for the recall of Chrysostom, and Eudoxia sent her chief eunuch, Briso, to meet him with an autograph letter in which she called God to witness that she was guiltless of any machinations against the holy man who had baptised her children.

403.  
and recall  
of Chry-  
sostom.

Thus did Chrysostom return, and was at first loud in his praises of the gracious Augusta who had exerted herself on his behalf. But soon the old enmities broke forth again. A silver statue of Eudoxia, mounted on a high column of porphyry, was dedicated with half-pagan rites on a Sunday in the Forum near the Church of St. Sophia. The noise of the heathenish merry-making disturbed the too scanty worshippers in the Church, and Chrysostom poured forth his indignation in a splendid torrent of angry eloquence. The words which he used, severe enough in themselves, were magnified by the rumour which bore them to the Empress. Even posterity has been similarly deceived,

Eudoxia's  
statue.

BOOK I. for the Church historians, Socrates and Sozomen, re-  
 CH. 14. port (as it is now believed quite erroneously) that on  
 403. this occasion the Bishop used the famous words, 'Again  
 Herodias rages, again she dances, again she demands  
 the head of John<sup>1</sup>.' There was again open enmity  
 between the great preacher and the Court-party ;  
 another council was assembled which confirmed the  
 deposition pronounced by the Synod of the Oak, and  
 after some weeks of tumult and violence, Chrysostom  
 was at last persuaded to go quietly on board the vessel  
 which was once more to bear him across the Bosphorus,  
 this time never to return. He was taken first to Cu-  
 cusus, a desolate village in the high uplands of Taurus,  
 on the borders of Cilicia and Lesser Armenia. The  
 bitter winter-cold of that mountainous region, and the  
 marauding ravages of the Isaurians, made his abode in  
 this place full of hardship, and he was already quite  
 broken in health when, after three years of exile, the  
 order arrived for his transference from Taurus to Cau-  
 casus, from the desolate Cilician village to the yet  
 more inhospitable Pityus on the Colchian shore of the  
 Black Sea. But he never survived, probably was not  
 expected to survive, to the end of the journey. Worn  
 out with fatigue and the cruelty of his guards, he died  
 at Comana in Pontus before he had reached the waters  
 of the Euxine.

Chry-  
 sostom's  
 second  
 exile.  
 June, 404.

June, 407.

His death.  
 14 Septem-  
 ber, 407.

Chry-  
 sostom and  
 Ambrose.

The story of Chrysostom irresistibly suggests both  
 by analogy and by contrast the story of the other great  
 preacher, his contemporary, Ambrose. Both were of  
 high birth : both coupled their names with the events of  
 a great insurrection—Chrysostom with the riot at

<sup>1</sup> The sermon beginning with these words attributed to Chrysostom  
 is now generally admitted to be spurious.

Antioch, Ambrose with the massacre of Thessalonica. Both were called upon to face the fury of a woman wielding absolute power through her ascendancy over an incapable Emperor; but while Ambrose gained a signal triumph over Justina, Chrysostom died broken-hearted and in exile, a victim to the vengeance of Eudoxia. And their fortunes were typical of the fortunes of the churches which they represented. Ambrose, as we have already noted, stands at the head of a long line of courageous and somewhat domineering churchmen who made the Caesars of the West tremble before them. Chrysostom's successors, perhaps disheartened by his fate, scarcely ever ventured on anything but the mildest remonstrance with the Emperor at Constantinople. The absolute ascendancy in the Church which the Sovereign thus obtained, 'Caesaro-papism,' as it is now the fashion to call it, was a remarkable feature in the constitution of the Eastern Empire, and one which is reproduced in its northern descendant. The Church of Russia in our own day acknowledges as her spiritual head the Autocrat of all the Russias, the Holy and Orthodox Czar.

BOOK I.  
CH. 14.

Old and feeble as he was, Chrysostom survived his arch-foe Eudoxia, who died in childbed 6th of October, 404. Who thereupon assumed the reins of government over Arcadius the meagre chronicles of his reign do not inform us. He himself died on the 1st of May, 408, and his death, as we shall see, led indirectly to certain momentous results in connection with the Empire of the West. Arcadius was still only in his thirty-first year at the time of his death. These sluggish Theodosians had not energy enough even to live.

Deaths of  
Eudoxia  
and Arcadius.



## CHAPTER XV.

### ALARIO'S FIRST INVASION OF ITALY.

#### Authorities.

#### *Sources :—*

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.

CLAUDIAN and OROSIUS are here our chief authorities, and even Claudian fails us after the year 404. ZOSIMUS is of hardly any use at all for this period. There are evidences of imperfection in the MS. (at the beginning of Book v. cap. 26), but they are not enough to exonerate Zosimus from the charge of extreme negligence or ignorance as to this part of the history. OLYMPIODORUS, who will be more fully described hereafter, gives us a hint or two about Radagaisus.

In the dearth of other materials we begin to find ourselves under considerable obligation to

#### THE ANNALISTS,

of whom it is now time to make some mention.

Five or six men, chiefly ecclesiastics, imposed upon themselves the task of continuing the chronicle which, begun by Eusebius and added to by Jerome, had described in short annalistic style the chief events in the history of the world from the Creation to the death of Valens. Some remarks upon the style and manner of thought of these annalists will be made in a later chapter. It is sufficient to observe here that they seldom give more than six lines to each year, often less, and that a disproportionate amount of that small space is devoted to petty ecclesiastical squabbles. I quote from the useful edition of Roncalli (2 vols. Padua, 1787).

The chief of the annalists for the period with which we are now engaged are PROSPER, IDATIUS, and MARCELLINUS. Both because of the intrinsic importance of his work and because of the peculiar and somewhat unsatisfactory condition in which it has been handed down to us, the first-named author must be described with some detail<sup>1</sup>.

TIRO PROSPER, a native of Aquitaine, whose exact birthplace is not known, lived from about 400 to 460. We are not able to state with certainty the year either of his birth or his death. He was apparently a man of good social position. One of the MSS. of his chronicle calls him *vir clarissimus*, but this is perhaps not to be taken in its strict technical sense, as denoting the third rank in the official Hierarchy of the Empire. Though his reputation among his contemporaries chiefly rested upon his theological works, it is almost certain that he never held even a deacon's rank in the church, but lived and died a layman. He is however known as Saint Prosper.

About the year 429, being then probably in his early manhood, he plunged with extraordinary ardour into the great Pelagian controversy. This controversy was then passing into its second phase, and Augustine on the one hand, and the so-called Semi-Pelagians of Gaul on the other, were the chief disputants, the former championing the sovereignty of Divine grace, and the latter vindicating the freedom of the human will. Prosper embraced with eagerness the cause of Augustine and opposed the Semi-Pelagian teaching of his fellow-countryman, Cassian of Marseilles, as Cassian had written a series of dialogues (*Collationes*) in praise of the monastic life, in one of which he had advanced opinions which seemed to be inconsistent with thorough-going Augustinianism. Prosper replied by his *Liber Contra Collatorem*, in which he vindicated what he maintained to be the catholic teaching concerning grace and free-will. Nor did he confine his energies to prose. In his *Carmen de Ingratis* he discoursed through one thousand hexameters against the ingratitude and pride of the Semi-Pelagian disputants who thought that any man could dispense with the grace of God; and in his book of *Epigrams* he expresses in alternate hexameters and pentameters the opinions of Augustine

<sup>1</sup> The following notice is founded on the elaborate paper by Oswald Holder-Egger in the *Neues Archiv* for 1876.

BOOK I. on such themes as grace and the law, the passions of saints and  
 CH. 15. the world's hatred of Christians. Whatever may be the judgment passed on the prose works of Prosper, his poems cannot be considered successful. A multitude of flat and prosaic lines are to be found in the *Carmen de Ingratis*, and the *Epigrams* are epigrams but in name, vapid dilutions of the pathetic eloquence of his mighty master.

It seems probable that about the year 440, Prosper removed to Rome, and there is some reason to think that he entered the service of the great Pope Leo as a *notarius*. It was currently reported in the succeeding generation that the far-famed letters of this Pope on the Eutychian controversy really proceeded from the pen of Prosper. However this may be, there can be little doubt that his later years were devoted to the Nestorian-Eutychian discussion on the nature of Christ, as earnestly as his earlier years had been given to the discussion with the Semi-pelagians concerning the nature of Man.

The date of his death is uncertain, but one of his brother-annalists (Marcellinus) mentions his name under the year 463, thus suggesting the possibility that this may have been the year of his death, since there seems no other reason for connecting it specially with his name.

The *Chronicon* of Prosper was probably first compiled in 433, continued to 445, and again continued to 455. Like almost all the similar productions of Christian annalists, it rests upon the great work of Eusebius (translated and continued by Jerome) in which the Old Testament history is blended and harmonised with the histories of the other nations around the Mediterranean Sea, as told by the classical writers of Greece and Rome. The Eusebius-Jerome Chronicle, beginning with the Creation of the World, ends, as above stated, with the death of Valens (378). The first part of Prosper's *Chronicon Integrum* goes over exactly the same ground and follows Jerome very closely. The few variations which Prosper has introduced are, for the most part, not improvements, and there is altogether much evidence of haste and inaccuracy in this part of the *Chronicon*, where little was required beyond the industry of a careful amanuensis.

The second part of the *Chronicon* (378-455) occupies a much higher position than the first. Here we have to deal no longer with a mere copyist, but with an independent annalist, with one

who for the last forty years of this period is a contemporary, sometimes our only contemporary authority: with one who whether writing in Gaul or at Rome is near to the theatre of great events, and who, from his position as 'Vir Clarissimus,' the friend and correspondent of Bishops, perhaps the *notarius* of Popes, had excellent opportunities for becoming acquainted with the true history of the period. Moreover his ecclesiastical interests caused Prosper to note carefully all that concerned the uprising of the great persecuting Arian power, the Vandal monarchy; and his Aquitanian origin induced him to record some events in the South of Gaul (especially the campaigns of Aetius and Litorius against the Visigoths) of which we should otherwise possess scarcely a trace. There is still some reason for complaining of haste and inaccuracy in this part of his work. He assigns a wrong date to the death of Athanaric (382 instead of 381) and he incorrectly attributes it to violence. He also misdates the death of Gratian (384 for 383) and the accession of Constantius the husband of Placidia (420 for 421); and his notices of the Council of Chalcedon (at 450 and 453 not at 451) are misleading, if not actually erroneous. But upon the whole Prosper has shown a fair amount of accuracy and intelligence in compiling the second part of his *Chronicon*, and whatever his faults may be, the yet greater faults of his few competitors leave him beyond dispute *the chief source of historical information for the first half of the Fifth Century.*

There are various recensions of Prosper's Chronicle. The most important is the *Chronicon Integrum*<sup>1</sup>, so named by contrast with the *Chronicon Vulgatum* in which the parts common to Prosper with Eusebius and Jerome are omitted (doubtless because it was published along with the works of those authors) and the last addition, from 445 to 455, also disappears. Except a few interpolations from Orosius, Cassiodorus and others, the text of the *Vulgatum* (where the two coincide) is practically the same as that of the *Integrum*<sup>2</sup>. The MS. *Augustanum*<sup>3</sup> corresponds very

<sup>1</sup> No. II. in Roncalli's Collection (i. 519-675).

<sup>2</sup> It is therefore not reprinted by Roncalli, but he gives the interpolations in italic type.

<sup>3</sup> So called as having been found at Augsburg (Augusta Vindelicorum). It is sometimes also referred to as *Canisianum* from the name of its first editor, or *Ulricianum* from the monastery in which it was deposited.



BOOK I. closely with the *Integrum* from 379 to 445, but diverges for the  
 CH. 15. period from 445 to 457 with which date it closes, except for a rapid sketch of the Vandal lords of Africa from 440 to 534. Everything about this MS. points to Carthage as its place of origin: but there are also some indications of special familiarity with the affairs of the Roman Church. The MS. *Vaticanum* is a meagre and inaccurate copy, probably made in the 6th or 7th century, and is chiefly interesting for the grotesque blunders in spelling made by the scribe, which show the changes which were being produced in the Latin language by the barbarian migrations. There is a MS. at Copenhagen (*Codex Hafniensis*) which contains an important continuation (of course by a much later hand) down to the year 641. It is considered to be the work of an Italian scribe writing under the rule of the Lombards, but it is partly composed of extracts from an authority now lost to us, which German scholars have agreed to call 'the Chronicles of Ravenna<sup>1</sup>,' and as reproducing this document, the *Codex Hafniensis* may be looked upon as in some sort a contemporary authority for the second half of the fifth century. It has been recently edited by Mommsen and published as part of his 'Chronica Minora' in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.

Another work which goes by the name of Tiro Prosper, though it certainly never proceeded from his pen, is the *Chronicon Imperiale*, also called (from its first editor) *Chronicon Pithoeanum*. It is true that it begins and ends with the same words which begin and end the second part of the genuine Prosper's Chronicle. Here however the correspondence ceases. While the *Chronicon Integrum* and its fellows reckon by the Consular year, the *Chronicon Imperiale* (as its name denotes) reckons by the years of Emperors. The succession of the Popes and the years of their pontificate which are given by Prosper with nearly complete accuracy are hopelessly entangled by his rival. The two Chronicles deal very often with entirely different sets of facts. The style of the *Chronicon Imperiale* is quite different from that of the *Integrum*, and from a literary point of view it is perhaps less contemptible. Gaulish events, especially those relating to the new barbarian monarchies, receive more attention from the author of the *Imperiale* than from the true Prosper. But it is

<sup>1</sup> Die Ravennalische Fasten.



chiefly in theological matters that the divergence between the two chronicles is most apparent. Augustine, the hero of the genuine Prosper, is almost sneered at by his double. His early addiction to Manicheism is cast in his teeth; he is said to have 'treated of many subjects in his innumerable books,' and he is accused of having founded the heretical sect of the Predestinarians. On the other hand Cassian, the great antagonist of Prosper, and the little knot of Semi-pelagian ecclesiastics to whom he dedicated the 'Collationes,' are spoken of in terms of almost fulsome praise.

It is certain then that the *Chronicon Imperiale* does not proceed from Prosper's hand. But unfortunately the scholars of the 17th century, feeling this divergence and wanting to distinguish between the two chroniclers, called the true Prosper by that name and gave his first name, Tiro, to his double. A most misleading and uncritical procedure certainly, but it is now perhaps too late to reverse it. Let it be understood then that whenever 'Tiro' is quoted it is with a protest, as equivalent to 'the pseudo-Prosper,' and that the name is attached to the work of one of whom we only know this much with certainty, that he was not called either Prosper or Tiro.

A special interest, however, for us attaches to this nameless chronicle (which was probably composed in the third quarter of the fifth century) since it contains in the following lines the only contemporary notice of the Teutonic conquest of Britain.

[409] 'Hac tempestate prae valetudine Romanorum vires funditus attenuatae. Britanniae Saxonum incursione devastatae.'

[441] 'Britanniae usque ad hoc tempus variis cladibus eventibusque laceratae in ditionem Saxonum rediguntur.'

It was not till about a century later that the wordy Gildas, our earliest British authority on the subject, told the story of the same conquest in his own peculiar style of querulous declamation.

IDATIUS, a native of Limica<sup>1</sup> in the extreme north of Portugal, was born towards the end of the fourth century. While still a boy ('infantulus') he travelled to Palestine and there saw, with reverence and admiration, Jerome in his cell at Bethlehem.

<sup>1</sup> Not Lamego, as stated in the first edition. See Mrs. Ward's article in Dictionary of Christian Biography.

BOOK I. Having returned to his own country he entered the ecclesiastical state and in or before the year 427 was consecrated Bishop, apparently of Aquae Flaviae, a city about fifty miles from his birthplace. In common with his people he suffered many indignities and hardships under the rule of the Arian Suevi, and in the year 431 went on an embassy to Aetius in Gaul to implore his aid against the oppressors. The journey was perhaps not wholly ineffectual, as Aetius sent Count Censorius as ambassador to the Suevi to accompany Idatius on his return. In the year 460, Idatius, accused by some informers of hostility to the Suevic rule, was taken prisoner in his own church by King Frumarius, the capture being accompanied by much violence towards the Catholics. He was, however, liberated after a captivity of less than four months, to the great disappointment of the informers. He died at an advanced age between 468 and 474.

Like Prosper, Idatius set himself to continue the Chronicle of Jerome, and his continuation reaches from 379 to 468. He himself tells us that the annals from 379 to 427 were chiefly compiled from books; from 427 onwards they were the result of his own observation and especially of his own bitter experience of barbarian oppression and ecclesiastical anarchy. Though not always correct in his chronology, Idatius has set before himself a high standard of historical accuracy, and his notices of events that occurred in Gaul and Spain, of the uneasy tossings of the Suevic, Visigothic, and Vandal nationalities, are especially valuable.

MARCELLINUS COMES<sup>1</sup> is in no sense a contemporary authority, as he flourished under Justinian, and is therefore separated by an interval of more than a century from the period now under consideration. But he had access to trustworthy authorities, and his continuation of Jerome's chronicle from 379 to 534 (continued by a later hand to 566) is one of our main authorities for the history of the fifth century. He avowedly deals chiefly with the Eastern Empire<sup>2</sup>, but occasionally throws some light on Western affairs. His very silence is sometimes interesting,

<sup>1</sup> In the heading of the Chronicles the author is called 'Comes, Vir Clarissimus,' Cassiodorus (Inst. Div. Litt. xvii.) tells us that he was Illyricianus. Was he 'Comes Commenciorum' or 'Comes Metallorum per Illyricum'? Both offices are mentioned in the Notitia (Oriens xiii).

<sup>2</sup> 'Orientale tantum secutus imperium.'

as showing of what slight account transactions which we perceive to have been of incalculable importance to Europe appeared to a Byzantine official.

BOOK I.  
Ch. 15.

THE year of gold, which was honoured by Stilicho's Consulship, and which, according to our computation, closed the century that had witnessed the foundation of Constantinople and the marriage between Christianity and the Empire, saw also Alaric's first invasion of Italy. The details of this inroad are supplied to us with a most sparing hand by the few historians who mention it, and even their meagre facts are not easy to reconcile with one another. The discussion of some of these difficulties is postponed to the note at the end of this chapter. In the meantime the following narrative is submitted to the reader as upon the whole the most probable that can be constructed out of the varying accounts of the authorities; but there is scarcely an event in it which can be stated with certainty, except the battle of Pollentia, and even that, as to its date, its cause, and its issue, is involved in perplexity and contradiction.

400.  
The end of  
the fourth  
century.

In the course of the year 400 Alaric descended into Italy with an army, which, as was so often the case in the campaigns of the barbarians, was not merely an army but a nation. Determined not to return to Illyria, but to obtain, by force or persuasion, a settlement for his people on the Italian soil, he brought with him his wife and children, the families of his warriors, all the spoil which he had taken in Greece, all the treasures which he had accumulated during his rule in Eastern Illyricum. He marched from Belgrade up the valley of the Save by Laybach and the well-remembered pass of the Pear-

Alaric  
enters  
Italy with  
an army  
and a  
nation.

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.  
—  
400.

Tree<sup>1</sup>. This road, the one by which most of the great invasions of Italy in the fifth century were made, presents, as has been before remarked, nothing of truly Alpine difficulty. It is mountainous ; it would furnish to an active general many opportunities for harassing such an army as that of Alaric, encumbered with women and waggons, but there is no feature of natural difficulty about it which our own Wales or Cumberland could not equal or surpass.

He passes  
Aquileia

Precisely, however, because of the comparatively defenceless character of this part of the Italian frontier, the wise forethought of Senate and Emperors had planted in this corner of the Venetian plain the great colony, port and arsenal of Aquileia, whose towers were visible to the soldiers of Alaric's army as they wound round the last spurs of the Julian Alps, descending into the valley of the Isonzo. Aquileia was still the Virgin-fortress, the Metz of Imperial Italy, and not even Alaric was to rob her of her impregnable glory. A battle took place under her walls<sup>2</sup>, in which the Romans suffered a disastrous defeat ; but the city—we may say with almost absolute certainty—did not surrender.

<sup>1</sup> Jordanes, *De Reb. Get.* cap. xxix: 'Et sumpto exercitu, per Pannonias Stilicone et Aureliano consulibus et per Sirmium dextro latere quasi viris vacuum intravit Italiam.' Compare Claudian, *De Bello Getico*, 281–288, where Stilicho distinctly asserts that the successes of Theodosius over Maximus and Eugenius had taught Alaric the way into Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Getico*, 562–3 :

'Deploratumque Timavo

Vulnus et Alpinum gladiis abolete pudorem.'

Stilicho speaks and urges his soldiers to avenge the defeat by the Timavus. The 'Fontes Timavi' are about ten miles east of Aquileia. In Claudian's poetical language any battle fought near Aquileia would answer this description.



Remembering, it may be, Frigidern's exclamation that 'he did not make war upon stone walls,' Alaric moved forward through Venetia. Across his road to Rome lay the strong city of Ravenna, guarded by a labyrinth of waters. He penetrated as far as the bridge, afterwards called the bridge of Candidianus, within three miles of the city<sup>1</sup>, but he eventually retired from the untaken stronghold, and abandoning, it would seem for the present, his designs on Rome, marched westward towards Milan.

BOOK I.  
Ch. 15.  
400 401.  
and  
Ravenna.

These operations may perhaps have occupied Alaric from the summer of 400 to that of 401. His progress seems slow and his movements uncertain, but some of the delay may be accounted for by the fact that he was acting in concert with another invader<sup>2</sup>. This was 'Radagaisus the Goth,' a man as to whose nationality something will have to be said when, five years later, he conducts an army into the heart of Italy on his own sole account. For the present all that can be said is that he entered Italy in concert with Alaric in the year 400, and that during that and the following year we have mysterious allusions from the pen of Claudian to some great troubles going on in Rhaetia (Tyrol and the Grisons), which province now formed part of Italy. As these troubles were sufficient to keep a large part of

Rada-  
gaisus co-  
operates,  
possibly in  
Rhaetia.

<sup>1</sup> 'Nullo penitus obsistente ad pontem applicuit Candidiani qui tertio milliaro ab urbe erat regia Ravennate.' Jordanes, *De Reb. Get.* xxix. This siege of Ravenna is in the highest degree conjectural. It rests only on the authority of Jordanes, whose account of Alaric's wars in Italy is chaos itself.

<sup>2</sup> *Prosperi Aquitani Chronicon*: 'Stilicone et Aureliano Consulibus [400] Gothi Italiam, Alarico et Rhadagaiso ducibus, ingressi.' M. A. *Cassiodori Chronicon*: 'Stilicho et Aurelianus. His Consulibus Gothi, Halarico et Radagaiso regibus, ingrediuntur Italiam.'



BOOK I. the Roman troops employed, and to require the presence  
 CH. 15. of Stilicho at a time when even the Emperor's sacred  
 400-401. person was in danger, it is at least a permissible conjecture that they were due to the invasion of Radagaisus, who was operating from the North, and trying to descend into Italy by the Brenner or the Splügen Pass, while Alaric was carrying on the campaign in the East, and endeavouring to reduce the fortresses of Venetia <sup>1</sup>.

Counter-  
 movements  
 of Hono-  
 rius and  
 Stilicho.

The movements of Honorius and Stilicho, the nominal and the real rulers of Italy, in response to this invasion, cannot be described with certainty. It would seem that the Rhaetian attack was the one which, at any rate during the first two campaigns, claimed the largest share of Stilicho's attention. If we could place entire dependence on the dates of the laws in the Theodosian code (which profess to indicate the residence of the Emperor on the day of the promulgation of each enactment), we should say that Honorius spent the greater part of the years 400, 401, and 402 at Milan, that in the spring and autumn of 400 he made two journeys to Aquileia and Ravenna, and that before December of 402 he had taken up his residence at Ravenna, which place was his home for the remainder of his life. Unfortunately these laws have not been edited with sufficient accuracy to allow us to quote these dates with absolute confidence, but there is nothing in them which is at variance with the view here put forward of the progress of Alaric's campaign. After several months had been consumed by the Visigoth in his

<sup>1</sup> Compare Claudian, *De Bello Getico*, 279-280:

'Irrupere Getae, nostras dum Rhaetia vires  
 Occupat atque alio desudant Marte cohortes.'

operations before Aquileia and Ravenna he advanced, in the year 401, up the valley of the Po, and besieged Honorius either in Milan or possibly in the strong city of Asti <sup>1</sup> (Asta in Piedmont).

Throughout the Roman world the consternation was extreme when it was known that the Goths, in overwhelming numbers, were indeed in Italy. A rumour like that of the fall of Sebastopol after the battle of the Alma, born none knew where, propagated none knew how, travelled fast over Britain, Gaul, and Spain, to the effect that the daring attempt of Alaric had already succeeded, that the City of Rome was even now his prey.

Claudian draws, in his murkiest colours, a picture of the gloom which prevailed at the Imperial Court<sup>2</sup>. Supernatural terrors deepened the darkness of a prospect dreary enough to political prescience. There were dismal dreams, whisperings of sinister prophecies in the Sibylline roll, eclipses of the moon, great hail-storms, untimely swarms of bees, and, worse than these, a comet, which first appeared in Cepheus and Cassiopeia, and then travelled on into the Seven Stars of Charles's Wain, too plainly foreboding danger from the Gothic waggon. But the worst portent was that of the two

Effect of  
Alaric's in-  
vasion on  
the minds  
of the  
Italians.

Gloomy  
auguries.

<sup>1</sup> 'Aut moenia vindicis Astae.' Claudian, De VI Consulatu Honorii, 203. I incline to the conjecture that it was in Milan, not at Asti, that the 'obsessi Principis nefas' (De Bello Getico, 561) occurred.

<sup>2</sup> At Milan, that is, rather than in Rome. It seems to me that lines 205-313 of the De Bello Getico contain nothing necessarily applicable to Rome, and probably describe the feelings of the *entourage* of Honorius at Milan. Lines 450-480, on the other hand (containing the passage 'Emicuit Stilichonis apex et cognita fulsit Canities'), are entirely and emphatically Roman.

BOOK I. wolves. Starting up under the very eyes of the Em-  
 CH. 15. peror while he was reviewing some squadrons of  
 401. cavalry, they attacked the soldiers, who slew them  
 with their darts. Strange to tell, inside of each was  
 found a human hand, one right, one left, with clenched  
 fingers, and still ruddy as if in life. The she-wolf  
 being the emblem of Rome, how could the Fates more  
 clearly indicate that her power was endangered, and  
 that both in the East and West she was to suffer some  
 grievous amputation ?

Cowardly  
 sugges-  
 tions.

Already the Italian nobles, the Emperor apparently  
 consenting, were deliberating whether they should take  
 to their ships, should flee to Corsica or Sardinia, or  
 should plant a new Rome on the banks of the Saone or  
 the Rhone. Stilicho alone, says the panegyrist, stood  
 unterrified, and prophesied the salvation which he him-  
 self was to achieve. 'Cease your unmanly lamenta-  
 tions, your foolish forebodings,' he adjured the courtiers.  
 'The Goths have, it is true, perfidiously stolen into our  
 country while our troops were busy in Rhaetia. But  
 Italy has borne and overborne worse shocks of fate  
 than this—the Gallic inroads, the irruptions of the  
 Cimbri and Teutones. And if Latium were to fall, if  
 you did basely abandon your mother-land to the  
 northern hosts, how long, think you, would you be left  
 in safety beside the streams of Gaul ? No ; tarry here  
 in Italy through the winter, while the flooded rivers of  
 Lombardy delay the march of Alaric. I will go to the  
 North to collect an army from the garrisons yonder,  
 and will return, after a short delay, to vindicate the  
 insulted majesty of Rome. And think not, my fellow-  
 citizens, that I shall not share your anxieties, for,  
 though absent myself, I leave in your midst my wife,

my children, and that son-in-law who is dearer to me than life.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.

So saying, he departed. He sailed in a little skiff up the olive-bordered Lake of Como. Then in the depth of winter (the winter of 401-2), he directed his course towards the province of Rhaetia, 'that province which gives birth to two rivers, the Danube and the Rhine, each of which serves as a bulwark to the realm of Romulus. But that side of Rhaetia which is turned towards Italy raises its peaks and ridges high towards the stars, and its passes, even in summer, are perilous for the traveller. Many in that terrible frost, as if at the sight of a Gorgon, have stiffened into stone: many have been whelmed in fathomless abysses, the waggons, the oxen which drew them, and the drivers being all sucked at once into the sparkling gulf. Often, under the south-wind's treacherous breath, the whole mountain seems to be loosed from its icy fetters, and rushes in ruin on the traveller's head.'

401-402.  
Stilicho's  
winter-  
campaign  
in Rhaetia.

'Through scenes like these, in winter's thickest snow  
Upon his dauntless course, pressed Stilicho.  
No genial juice to Bacchus there is born,  
And Ceres reaps a niggard store of corn.  
But he,—his armour never laid aside—  
Tasted the hurried meal, well satisfied;  
And, still encumbered with his dripping vest,  
Into his frozen steed the rowel pressed.  
On no soft couch his wearied members lay,  
But when dark night cut short his arduous way  
He sought such shelter as some wild beast's cave,  
Or mountain-shepherd's hut to slumber gave,  
The shield his only pillow. Pale with fear  
Surveyed his mighty guest the mountaineer.  
And the rude housewife bade her squalid race  
Gaze on the unknown stranger's glorious face.  
Those couches hard the horrent woods below,  
Those slumbers under canopies of snow,

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.

401-402,

Those wakeful toils of his, that ceaseless care  
Gave to the world this respite, did prepare  
For us unhopèd-for rest. From dreadful doom  
He, in those Alpine huts, redeemed thee, Rome<sup>1</sup>.

In the course of this Rhaetian campaign, Stilicho seems to have effectually repelled the invading hosts, who, according to the view here maintained, under the leadership of Radagaisus, were threatening Italy from the North. He not only pushed them back into their settlements by the Danube, but he also raised, in these trans-Alpine provinces and among these half-rebellious tribes, an army sufficient in numbers for its work, but not so great as to be burdensome to Italy or formidable to its ruler. 'The troops which had lately defended Rhaetia came, loaded with spoil, to the rescue of Italy.' At the same time the legions were withdrawn from other countries to shelter Rome. The Rhine was left bare of Roman troops, and the Twentieth Legion, one of three which had for centuries been stationed in Britain, generally at Chester, was now removed finally from service in this island<sup>2</sup>.

Troops  
raised for  
the defence  
of Italy,

and with-  
drawn  
from the  
Provinces.

<sup>1</sup> De Bello Getico, 348-362.

<sup>2</sup> This we are expressly told by Claudian (De Bello Getico, 416-8):

'Venit et extremis legio praetenta Britannis  
Quae Scoto dat frena truci, ferroque notatas  
Perlegit exsanguis Picto moriente figuras.'

It is true that the mention of service against the Picts and Scots would have led us to think rather of the Sixth Legion, stationed at York, than of the Twentieth, at Chester. It is quite clear, however, that the Sixth (and Second) remained in Britain till a later period than this, and it is probable that the Twentieth had been removed from the now comparatively secure Western frontier, and may have been engaged in Caledonian warfare. Nor are expressions of this kind in a rhetorical poet like Claudian to be construed too literally. It is interesting to connect his word 'praetenta' with the 'vigiliae et praetenturae' (garrisons and outposts) with which, as Ammianus



The clouds which have gathered round the movements of both the rival chiefs are at length partially lifted, and we find them face to face with one another at Pollentia during the season of Easter 402. About twenty miles south-east of Turin, on the left bank of the Tanaro, in the great alluvial plain which is here Piedmont, but a little further east will be Lombardy, still stands the little village of Pollenzo, which by its ruined theatre and amphitheatre yet shows traces of the days when it was a flourishing Roman municipality, renowned for its manufactures of dark woollen cloth and of earthenware. This was the place which Alaric and his Goths were now besieging<sup>1</sup>.

Sieges, as we have seen abundantly in the course of this history, were generally unfortunate for the Northern warriors, whose inroads were, as a rule, most successful when they pushed boldly on through the fertile country, neglecting the fortresses, and despising the troops that garrisoned them. It may be that already a doubt of the prosperous issue of the invasion had dawned upon some of the Gothic veterans, and

tells us (xxviii. 3. 7), Theodosius Senior guarded this same British frontier. The fact that the Twentieth Legion nowhere appears in the *Notitia* is used with much apparent probability as an argument for assigning the date of that work to this very year 402 (or 403) when the Legion had been withdrawn from service in Britain, but before it had been permanently enrolled among the Italian forces. See J. Hodgson Hinde's *History of Northumberland*, p. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Pertinax the Roman emperor was born within sight of Pollentia and, together with his father, carried on either an earthenware manufactory or a timber business at that place. In this obscure calling he probably learned those habits of frugality and strictness of life which, when he ascended the throne after the death of Commodus, made him at once dear to all good citizens and hateful to the Praetorian guards by whom he was soon murdered.

BOOK I. that some such divided counsels as Claudian describes  
CH. 15. in the following sketch existed in the camp.

402.  
A Gothic  
Council.  
De Bello  
Getico,  
480-557.  
‘The long-haired fathers of the Gothic nation, their fur-clad senators marked with many an honourable scar, assembled. The old men leaned on their tall clubs instead of staves. One of the most venerable of these veterans arose, fixed his eyes upon the ground, shook his white and shaggy locks and spoke :

Speech of  
the Leader  
of the  
Opposition.  
“Thirty years have now elapsed since first we crossed the Danube and confronted the might of Rome. But never, believe me, O Alaric, did the weight of adverse battle lie so heavy on us as now. Trust the old chief who, like a father, once dandled thee in his arms, who gave thee thy first tiny quiver. Often have I, in vain, admonished thee to keep thy treaty with Rome, and remain safely within the limits of the Eastern realm. But now, at any rate while thou still art able, return, flee the Italian soil. Why talk to us perpetually of the fruitful vines of Etruria, of the Tiber, and of Rome. If our fathers have told us aright, that city is protected by the Immortal Gods, lightnings are darted from afar against the presumptuous invader, and fires heaven-kindled flit before its walls. And if thou carest not for Jupiter, yet beware of Stilicho, of him who heaped high the bones of our people upon the hills of Arcadia, him who would then have blotted out thy name had not domestic treason and the intrigues of Constantinople rescued thee from his grasp.”

Alaric's  
reply.

‘Alaric burst in upon the old man's speech with fiery brow and scowling eyes—

“If age had not bereft thee of reason, old dotard, I would punish thee for these insults. Shall I, who

have put so many Emperors to flight, listen to thee, prating of peace. No, in this land I will reign as conqueror, or be buried after defeat. The Alps having been traversed, the Po being witness of our victories, only Rome remains to be overcome. In the day of our weakness and calamity, when we had not a weapon in our hands, we were terrible to our foes. Now that I have made the reluctant Illyrian forge for us a whole arsenal of arms, we are not going, I presume, to turn our backs to these same enemies. No! Beside all other reasons for hope there is the certainty of God's<sup>1</sup> help. No dreams, no flight of birds revealed it to me. Forth from the grove came a clear voice, heard of many, 'Break off all delays, Alaric. This very year, if thou lingerest not, thou shalt pierce through the Alps into Italy; thou shalt penetrate to the City itself.'"

'So he spoke, and drew up his army for the battle. Oh ever-malignant ambiguity of oracles, so dark even to the utterers, so clear to them and to their hearers when the event has made them plain! At the extreme verge of Liguria he came to a river, known by the strange name of Urbis<sup>2</sup>, and there defeated, recognised his doom.'

*Penetrabis  
ad Urbem.*

The reader is requested to observe that we have here

<sup>1</sup> Claudian says *Deos*. On account of the clearly established fact of Alaric's profession of Christianity, I have used monotheistic language.

'Hortantes his adde Deos: non somnia nobis  
Non volucres; sed clara palam vox edita luco est  
Rumpe omnes Alarice moras. Hoc impiger anno  
Alpibus Italiae ruptis, *penetrabis ad Urbem*.'

De Bello Getico, 544-547.

<sup>2</sup> According to Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, v. 530), the name of this river is preserved in the modern *Borbo*, a stream between Asti and Pollenzo.

BOOK I. an undoubted case of a fulfilled presentiment. Six  
 CH. 15. years after the composition of this poem, Alaric did  
 402. in truth 'penetrate to the City.' Now the hostile  
 poet taunts him with his belief that he was called  
 thither by Destiny, and triumphs over the apparent  
 ruin of his hopes.

Alaric  
 attacked in  
 the midst  
 of his  
 devotions  
 on Good  
 Friday,  
 6th April,  
 402.

Claudian's verses pourtray the Gothic chieftain, after this council, drawing up his army in battle array at Pollentia. It seems certain, however, that Alaric was taken unawares and forced into a battle which he had not foreseen; and this from a cause which illustrates the strange reactions of the barbaric and civilised influences upon one another in this commencing chaos. As was before said, Eastertide was at hand: on the 6th of April, Easter Sunday itself occurred<sup>1</sup>. Alaric, with his army, Christian though Arian, was keeping the day with the accustomed religious observances, when he was attacked and forced to fight by Stilicho's lieutenant, Saulus<sup>2</sup>. This man, the same who fought under Theodosius at the battle of the Frigidus, was by birth an Alan, and was probably surrounded by many of his countrymen, that race of utter savages who once dwelt between the Volga and the Don, and arrested the progress of the Huns, but had now yielded to their uncouth conquerors and rolled on with them over Europe, as fierce and as heathenish as they. The pigmy body of Saulus was linked to a dauntless spirit;

Battle  
 com-  
 menced by  
 Saulus.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Art de vérifier les Dates*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> It is not quite clear that Stilicho himself was present at the battle, though Claudian seems to assert it positively. The name of Saulus is not mentioned by Claudian, but there can be little doubt that he is the 'Alanus' described in the *De Bello Getico*, 580-590.

every limb was covered with the scars of battle, his face had been flattened by many a club stroke, and his little dark Tartar eyes glowed with angry fire. He knew that suspicions had been entertained of his loyalty to the Empire, and he burned to prove their falsity. Having forced Alaric and his warriors to suspend their Paschal devotions, he dashed his cavalry with Hun-like impetuosity against their stately line of battle. At the first onset he fell, and his riderless horse, rushing through the ranks, carried dismay to the hearts of his followers. The light cavalry on the wings were like to have fled in disastrous rout, when Stilicho moved forward the steady foot-soldiers of the legions from the centre, and turned, says Claudian, defeat into victory. The Gothic rout (if we may trust Claudian's story of the battle) soon became a disastrous flight. The Roman soldiers, eager for revenge, were scarce diverted from their purpose by the rich stores of plunder which were thrown in their way by the despairing fugitives. On the capacious Gothic waggons were heaped piles of gold and silver coin, massive bowls from Argos, statues instinct, as it seemed, with life, snatched from burning Corinth. Every trophy of the barbarian but added fury to the Roman pursuit, reviving as it did the bitter memories of Roman humiliation; and this fury reached its height when, amid a store of other splendid apparel, the purple garments of the murdered Valens were drawn forth to light. Crowds of captives who had followed the chariot of the Gothic king for years now received their freedom, kissed the gory hands of their deliverers, and, revisiting their long deserted homes, looked with wonder on the changes wrought there by Time. On the other hand,

BOOK I.

CH. 15.

402.



BOOK I.  
CH. 15.

402.

Alaric, hurrying from the field, heard with anguish the cries of his wife, his wife whose proud spirit had urged him on to the conflict, who had declared that she was weary of Grecian trinkets and Grecian slaves, and that he must provide her with Italian necklaces and with the haughty ladies of Rome for her handmaidens, but who was now herself carried into captivity with her children and the wives of her sons<sup>1</sup>.

Was Pollentia a Roman victory?

After the vivid and circumstantial account which Claudian gives us of the Roman victory at Pollentia, it is almost humiliating to be obliged to mention that there is some doubt whether it was a Roman victory at all. Cassiodorus and Jordanes both say distinctly that the Goths put the Roman army to flight. Both of these authors, however, are in the Gothic interest, and the earliest of them wrote at least a century after the date of the battle. Orosius, a Roman and a contemporary, speaks of the unfortunate battles waged near Pollentia, in which 'we conquered in fighting, in conquering we were defeated.' It is possible that this alludes to the fact that the Romans attacked on Good

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, in his *De Bello Getico*, 625-632, seems to wish us to understand that Alaric's wife was carried captive without distinctly asserting it. In the *De Sexto Consulatu Honorii*, 297-8, he makes Alaric say more plainly—

'Sed pignora nobis

Romanus, carasque nurus, praedamque tenebat.'

In the first passage the female impatience of the general's wife for the acquisition of slaves and necklaces makes us enquire whether the poet had read the words of the mother of Sisera as imagined in Judges v. 28-30: 'Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?'

Friday, an impiety which the ecclesiastical historian cannot forgive. The subsequent course of the history seems to show that the bulk of the Gothic army remained intact, and that its spirit was not broken. On the other hand, the language of Claudian (confirmed by his contemporary Prudentius) seems to make it incredible that the Romans can have been really and signally defeated. Probably it was one of those bloody but indecisive combats, like Borodino and Leipzig, in which he who is technically the victor is saved but as by a hair's breadth from defeat, a result which is not surprising when we remember that here the numbers and impetuosity of the Goths were met, for the first time on Italian soil, by the courageous skill of Stilicho. Then, after such a battle, however slight might be the disadvantage of the Goths, the long train of their wives and children, their captives and their spoils would tell heavily against them in retreat; and though we may doubt the captivity of the wife of Alaric and the recovery of the purple robe of Valens, we may well believe that a large share of the Gothic booty did fall into the hands of the Imperial soldiers.

That the battle of Pollentia was no crushing defeat for the Goths seems sufficiently proved by the events which immediately followed it. Stilicho concluded a treaty of some kind with Alaric, perhaps restored to him his wife and children<sup>1</sup>, and the Gothic king re-crossing the Po commenced a leisurely retreat through Lombardy<sup>2</sup>. Having arrived at Verona, and committed

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.  
—  
402.

Retreat of  
Alaric.

Battle of  
Verona.

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, De VI Cons. Honorii, 298.

<sup>2</sup> Both Gibbon (vol. iv. p. 38, ed. Smith) and Aschbach (p. 75) speak of Alaric as still contemplating a march on Rome after the battle of Pollentia. I have not been able to find the authority for this statement either in Claudian or elsewhere.

BOOK I.

CH. 15.

403 (?)

Policy of  
Stilicho  
towards  
Alaric.

some act which was interpreted as a breach of the treaty, he there, according to Claudian, sustained another severe defeat; but this engagement is not mentioned by any other writer. The poet tells us that, had it not been for the too headlong zeal of the Alan auxiliaries, Alaric himself would have been taken. As it was, however, he succeeded in repassing the Alps, with what proportion of his forces we are quite unable to determine. Claudian, who is our only authority for this part of the history, gives us no accurate details, only pages of declamation about the crushed spirits of the Gothic host, the despair of their leader, and his deep regret at ever having allowed himself to be cajoled away from the nearer neighbourhood of Rome by his fatal treaty with Stilicho. Reading between the lines, we can see that all this declamation is but a laboured defence of Stilicho's conduct in making a bridge of gold for a retreating foe. That much and angry criticism was excited by this and some similar passages of the great minister's career is evidenced by the words of the contemporary historian Orosius (immediately following the mention of Stilicho's name), 'I will not speak of King Alaric with his Goths, often defeated, often hemmed in, and always allowed to escape<sup>1</sup>.' Probably, however, the criticisms were unjust. Stilicho had a weapon of uncertain temper to wield, legionaries enervated and undisciplined, barbarian auxiliaries, some of whom might sympathise with their northern brethren if they saw them too hardly pressed. It was by skill of fence rather than by mad clashing of sword against sword that the game was to be won,

<sup>1</sup> 'Taceo de Alarico rege cum Gothis suis saepe victo saepe concluso semperque dimisso' (vii. 37).

and it would have been poor policy to have driven the Visigothic army to bay, and to have let them discover

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.  
403 (?)

‘What reinforcements they might gain from hope;  
If not, what resolution from despair.’

At the end of this first great campaign of the barbarians in Italy we naturally ask ourselves what were the feelings of the inhabitants of Italy and of Rome when they found the traditional impregnability of their country to ‘aught but Romans’ so rudely disproved. How deep in those Imperial centuries might be the repose of Roman provincial life we infer from the epistles of the younger Pliny, and even from an early poem by Claudian himself as to a district which was ravaged in this very campaign. It is strange to turn from the description of the battle of Verona to these lines in which the poet dilates on the quiet felicity of an old man who has spent all his days on his farm not far from that city.

Effect on  
the minds  
of the  
Italians of  
the operations of  
Alaric.

De Sene  
Veronensi.

‘Happy this man, whose life has flowed away  
In that old home whose past he knows so well;  
Through the same fields, staff-propt, he takes his way  
Where, as a boy, he leapt and laughed and fell.  
Him Fortune drags not in her weary whirl,  
Nor drinks he, wandering, from un-homish streams;  
He sees no banners flaunt, no white waves curl,  
No wrangling law-suit haunts his peaceful dreams.  
Strange to the town and heedless of the great,  
He loves his own street-unencumbered sky.  
For him no Consul’s name denotes the date;  
By flowers and harvests marked, his years slip by.  
Above his lands he sees the sunrise red,  
Above his lands the sunset’s fading gold.  
His hand once held the oak that shades his head;  
He and his woods together have grown old.

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.

Verona seems far off as farthest Ind,  
 And Garda's lake as is the Red Sea's strand.  
 His massive muscles still strong sinews bind  
 Though his sons' sons full grown before him stand.  
 Go, thou who yearnest still for foreign air;  
 Go, see who dwell by Spain's remotest stream;  
 Thou of earth's highways hast the largest share,  
 But he of living has the joy supreme<sup>1</sup>;

Effect on  
 the citizens  
 of Rome.

When Alaric's troops were swarming round Verona, whether in the insolence of victory or in the rage of defeat, it would be too much to hope that this picture of lethargic and simple happiness was not in some degree marred by their presence. At Rome the first news that the barbarians were south of the Alps filled all ranks with terror. Stilicho dissuaded them from flight, promised to collect troops for their deliverance, and induced them to assume an appearance of courage even if they did not feel it. He then departed for the northern campaign. Meantime they set to work vigorously to rebuild the walls of the city. During the prosperous days of the Republic and Empire Rome had needed no walls<sup>2</sup>. When the clouds of barbaric invasion in the third century were gathering around her, Aurelian, the undoubted hero of that evil time, had surrounded her with fortifications. These were at this time renewed; and to this day the walls of Honorius are a frequent subject of discussion in the long debates of Roman archaeologists.

While thus engaged, the citizens often looked forth with dread over the plain, and up to the cloudless sky,

<sup>1</sup> 'Erret et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos,  
 Plus habet hic *vitae*, plus habet ille *viae*.'

<sup>2</sup> The old walls of Servius Tullius were now quite outgrown by the City.



with a superstitious fear lest Heaven itself was fighting against them. Each river that crossed the Lombard plain was one barrier the more against the dreaded Alaric; but where were the storms of winter that should have swollen the brooks into streams and the streams into rivers? Day after day passed by, and still the rain came not, and surely the Goth would come<sup>1</sup>. At length the watchmen on the loftiest towers saw a cloud of dust rolling up from the horizon. Was it raised by the feet of enemies or of friends? The silence of a terrible suspense reigned in every heart, till

BOOK I.  
CH. 15.  
402-3.

Stilicho's  
return.

‘Forth from the dusty whirlwind, like a star,  
Shone forth the helm of Stilicho from far,  
And that white head, well known, well loved of all;  
Then sudden thrilled along the crowded wall  
The cry “He comes, himself,” and through the gate  
The glad crowd pressed, to view his armed state<sup>2</sup>.’

This visit, if not a mere poetical imagination, must have occurred before the battle of Pollentia. After the close of the campaign, and when Italy was again cleared of her invaders, the gladness of delivered Rome seemed to claim a more conspicuous expression. To the year 404 the Emperor deigned to affix his name as ‘Consul for the sixth time’; and he and his father-in-law appear to have visited Rome to celebrate a triumph over the Goths<sup>3</sup>. Strange to say, during the whole preceding century, Rome had only four times seen an

Triumph of  
Honorius  
over the  
Goths cele-  
brated at  
Rome, 404.

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Getico*, 47-49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 458-462.

<sup>3</sup> An inscription described by Gruter, which commemorated ‘the perpetual subjugation of the Gothic nation (‘*Getarum nationem in omne aevum domitam*’), if genuine, is probably to be referred to this triumphal entry of Honorius into Rome.

BOOK I. Emperor within her walls, Constantine (312) after his  
Ch. 15. — victory over Maxentius, Constantius (357) four years  
404. after the overthrow of Magnentius, and Theodosius  
 (389) after his defeat of Maximus, and again (394)  
 after his defeat of Eugenius.

De VI  
 Consulatu  
 Honorii,  
 547-562.

The Romans might naturally contrast the doubtful joy of these victories over their fellow-countrymen with the unalloyed delight of their recent deliverance from the barbarians. The young men rejoiced to welcome an Emperor their equal in years; the old saw with pleasure that he did not, like his predecessors, make the Senators walk, as slaves, before his chariot. They said, 'Other Emperors came like masters, this one like a citizen.' By the side of Maria the Empress, stood her brother Eucherius, wearing no insignia of exalted rank (for Stilicho was chary of honours for his son), but giving the homage of a soldier to his chief.

'Then the matrons admired the fresh-glowing cheeks of Honorius, his hair bound with the diadem, his limbs clothed with the jewelled *trabea* (consular robe), his strong shoulders, his neck, which might vie with that of Bacchus, rising from amid Arabian emeralds.

Lines  
 578-583.

'Stilicho himself, borne along in the same car with the son of Theodosius, felt with proud satisfaction that he had now indeed fulfilled the trust reposed in him by the dying father.'

Last exhibi-  
 tion of  
 gladiators.

Among other amusements with which the citizens of Rome were regaled on this occasion, a venerable tradition places the last and the most memorable of the gladiatorial combats<sup>1</sup>. Prohibited as these exhibitions had

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret in his Ecclesiastical History (v. 26) relates this story. As he was seventeen years old when Honorius visited Rome, he is entitled to the full authority of a contemporary: though not of an

been by an edict of Constantine, they still held their ground in half heathen Rome. A butchery, doubtless of unusual magnificence, was to celebrate the defeat of Alaric. Probably some of the captive Visigoths themselves were to minister to the brutal enjoyment of those who had so lately quailed before their very names. Already the lists were set, the combats commenced, the first blood had been drawn. The eager 'habet,' 'habet,' was resounding from imperial, senatorial, and proletariat benches, when an eastern monk, Telemachus by name, was seen stalking down from seat to seat of the crowded Colosseum, till at length he reached the arena. Astonishment held the spectators mute till his strange purpose was made manifest. He was thrusting himself in between the gladiators, and endeavouring at the risk of his own life to part the combatants. Then uprose a cry of execration from *podium* to gallery, and missiles of every sort were hurled down upon the audacious disturber of the bloody game. He died: in his death, most Christ-like, he did in truth 'give his life for the flock;' and not in vain, for Honorius, moved to awe and pity by the strange scene which he had witnessed, not only recognised him as saint and martyr, but for his sake decided that shows of gladiators should be, not in name only, but in deed, abolished.

With this visit of Honorius and Stilicho to Rome ends our companionship with Claudian, whose verses,

We part  
company  
with  
Claudian.

eye-witness, as he was a citizen of Antioch. Honorius' presence fixes the event to the year 404. The few dry lines of Theodoret have been expanded by Sydney Dobell into one of the finest passages in 'The Roman'—with all its faults certainly a noble poem. (See Scene viii.)

BOOK I. whatever their defects, have shed over the last eventful  
 CH. 15. nine years a light which we shall grievously miss in  
 those that are to come. He tells us himself<sup>1</sup> that after  
 404. his poem on the Gildonic war, a brazen statue had been  
 Uncer- tainty as erected in his honour, and dedicated by some personage  
 tainty as to the end of his career. of patrician dignity<sup>2</sup>. From a letter addressed by him  
 to Serena, we find that the good offices of that powerful  
 patroness had enabled him to win the hand of an  
 African lady, whom we may safely presume to have  
 been an heiress. The wedding was celebrated in her  
 country, and, as we have no certain information, we  
 may conjecture that he did not return to Italy, and  
 that the divine Honorius, Stilicho, Alaric, and even  
 Rome herself were wellnigh forgotten in the society of  
 his Libyan wife and the administration of her estate.  
 At any rate, from this time forward, his Muse no  
 longer gives life and colour to the historical picture.  
 The dry bones of the annalists, the disjointed para-  
 graphs of Zosimus and Orosius, and the faint and  
 partial sketches of ecclesiastical historians are our only  
 materials for the subsequent history of the Visigothic  
 invasion<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to the *De Bello Getico*, 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> An inscription of very doubtful genuineness, said to have been discovered at Rome, informs us that this statue was erected in the Forum of Trajan, and that the poet held at that time the offices of Tribune and Notary, and was entitled to be addressed as *Clarissimus*. This inscription is recorded by Gruter, but rests on the sole authority of Pomponius Laetus, a Renaissance scholar ('vidit Pomponius Laetus').

<sup>3</sup> Had the poem entitled *De Secundo Consulatu Stilichonis* been correctly named, the poetical career of Claudian would have been brought down to 405. But there cannot be a shadow of a doubt that this is really a third poem on Stilicho's *First* Consulship. It has been attempted to extract some information as to the end of Claudian's



The following year witnessed the second consulship of Stilicho, and another great inroad of barbarians, which comes as a mysterious interlude in the great duel between Alaric and Rome. Alaric was not the leader in this new invasion; he was at this time, according to one<sup>1</sup> authority, quartered in Epirus, and concerting measures with Stilicho for a joint attack on the Eastern Empire. The new invasion was headed by the wild figure of Radagaisus, a Goth<sup>2</sup>, but not of Alaric's following, though formerly his confederate; possibly one of the Ostrogoths, who had remained in their old homes by the Euxine when the tide of Hunnish invasion rolled over them. This man, 'far the most savage of all past or present enemies of Rome<sup>3</sup>,' was known to be fanatically devoted to the false deities of his heathen ancestors; and as the tidings came that he, with his 200,000, or some said 400,000, followers, had crossed the Alps, and was vowing to satiate his fierce

life from a melancholy and most humiliating letter addressed to 'Hadrianus, Prefect of the Palace,' in which the Poet describes himself as utterly crushed, and begs his powerful antagonist to trample no longer on so mean a foe. A certain Hadrianus was *Praefectus Praetorio* in 405, and also in 416. But (1) the MSS. greatly vary as to the heading of this epistle, some even calling it *Deprecatio ad Stilichonem*; (2) there is nothing to connect it with the latter rather than the earlier part of Claudian's career; and (3) the whole piece sounds more like banter than earnest; and, in short, is too unsubstantial for the edifice which some have sought to erect upon it. Had Claudian lived at Rome up to the fall of Stilicho (408), it would be passing strange that nothing from his pen as to the exciting events between 404 and 408 should have been preserved.

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 26; confirmed by Sozomen, viii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> The theory of the Slavonic origin of Radagaisus is now generally abandoned.

<sup>3</sup> 'Radagaisus, omnium antiquorum praesentiumque hostium longe immanissimus.' Orosius, vii. 37.



BOOK I.  
CH. 15.

405.

gods with the blood of all who bore the Roman name, a terrible despair seized all the fair cities of Italy ; and Rome, herself, on the very verge of ruin, was stirred with strange questionings. Nowhere did the spirit of the ancient paganism linger so stubbornly as in the neglected city by the Tiber ; and now from the apparently imminent danger of the Eternal City, the many to whom the name of Christ was hateful drew courage to utter their doubts aloud. 'These men, the barbarians, have gods in whom they believe, strange and uncouth deities it is true, but yet gods represented in visible form to whom they offer bloody sacrifices. We have renounced the protection of our old ancestral divinities, we have allowed the Christians, who are in truth Atheists<sup>1</sup>, to destroy every other religion in their fanatic zeal for the crucified Galilean ; what marvel if we perish, being thrust, thus destitute of all supernatural aid, into collision with the wild yet mighty deities of Germany<sup>2</sup> ?'

Radagaisus shut up among the hills of Tuscany,

However, Rome's hour of doom had not yet come. The fierce barbarian horde, instead of marching along the Lombard plain to Rimini, and thence by the comparatively easy Flaminian Way to Rome, chose the nearer but difficult route across the Tuscan Apennines. Stilicho marched against them, it is said with thirty legions<sup>3</sup>, and succeeded in hemming them in, in the rugged hill country, where, owing to the shortness of provisions, their very numbers were their ruin. Power-

<sup>1</sup> The identification of Christianity with atheism is a commonplace with the Emperor Julian and other Pagan writers.

<sup>2</sup> Both Augustin and Orosius dwell with great emphasis on this recrudescence of Paganism at the approach of Radagaisus.

<sup>3</sup> Zosimus, v. 26.

fully supported by Uldin, the chief of the Huns, and by Sarus, who commanded other Gothic (perhaps Visigothic) auxiliaries, Stilicho at length succeeded in forcing all that remained of that mighty host to encamp on one rough and barren chain of mountains near to Faesulae, and probably within sight of the then tiny town of Florentia<sup>1</sup>.

Without incurring any of the risks of battle, the Roman army, 'eating, drinking, sporting' (says Orosius), for some days kept watch over 200,000 starving men, till at last Radagaisus gave up the game, and tried to steal away from his camp. He fell into the hands of the Roman soldiery, was kept prisoner for a little time—perhaps with some thought of his decking the triumph of Consul Stilicho—and then put to death. defeated  
and slain.

His unhappy followers were sold for an *aureus* (about twelve shillings sterling) apiece, like the poorest cattle; but owing to the privations which they had endured, they died off so fast that the purchasers (as Orosius tells us with grim satisfaction) took no gain of money, having to spend on the burial of their captives the money which they had grudged for their purchase. And thus ended the invasion of Radagaisus<sup>2</sup>. His fol-  
lowers sold  
for slaves.

<sup>1</sup> Catiline was surrounded and defeated near the same spot by the armies of the Republic.

<sup>2</sup> In a rather obscure passage 'Tiro' seems to assert that it was only one third of the host of Radagaisus that was destroyed by Stilicho. Hence some writers have suggested that the invaders of Gaul, who will be spoken of in the next chapter, consisted of the two-thirds who escaped. But there is nothing in the authorities to justify this assertion, nor is it in itself very probable.

NOTE I. ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF ALARIC'S FIRST  
INVASION.

NOTE I. The dates here assigned to Alaric's first invasion are earlier than those adopted by my three most trusted guides, Gibbon, Tillemont, and Clinton; it is chiefly Pallmann's arguments that have induced me to accept them. I deem it necessary therefore briefly to set forth the reasons for the new chronology.

If we call the old chronology Tillemont's, and the new Pallmann's, the following are the chief differences between them:—

	TILLEMONT.	PALLMANN.
400	Alaric enters Italy.	Alaric and Radagaisus enter Italy.
401	Is driven out of it by Stilicho.	Desultory warfare in the north-east of Italy.
402	Alaric returns into Italy.	Battle of Pollentia (Good Friday).
403	Battle of Pollentia (Good Friday) Verona; Alaric's retreat.	Battle of Verona; Alaric's retreat.
404	Triumphal entry of Honorius into Rome and his sixth Consulship.	

It will be seen that the chief point of difference is the date of the battle of Pollentia, which Tillemont places in 403, Pallmann in 402. But this works retrospectively, thus: 'Nous avons peine à croire qu'Alaric soit demeuré en Italie jusqu'à la bataille de Pollence donnée en l'an 403; nous aimons mieux croire que Stilicon trouva quelque moyen de les faire sortir tous deux (Alaric et Radagaise) d'Italie en 401; mais qu'Alaric y revint sur la fin de 402.' Thus we have to suppose a retreat of which no mention is made in history. Clinton, by putting the invasion of 400 in brackets, seems inclined to go a step further and doubt the reality of this abortive invasion (400-402) altogether.

And yet, if we go to the man who is really our earliest and best historical authority, Prosper, the matter is clear enough. Translating the years of the Roman Consuls into years of the Christian Era, this is his chronology:—

400. 'Gothi Italiam, Alarico et Rhadagaiso, ducibus ingressi.'  
 402. 'Pollentiae adversus Gothos vehementer utriusque partis clade pugnatum est.'  
 405. 'Rhadagaisus in Thusciâ multis Gothorum millibus caesis, ducente exercitum Stilicone superatus est.'

The first of these dates is confirmed by Cassiodorus and by Jordanes (whom it is safest however to consider as only an echo of Cassiodorus), the second by Cassiodorus alone<sup>1</sup>. What is there to set against this positive testimony? As regards the original entry of Alaric and Radagaisus into Italy, one firm statement from a high authority (the so-called '*Chronicon Cuspiniani*'), which says under the year 401 'et intravit Alaricus in Italiam xiv. Kal. Decemb.' There is a contradiction here which we cannot reconcile, and the only course seems to be to allow the double testimony of Prosper and Cassiodorus to outweigh the single testimony of the *Chronicon Cuspiniani*.

But as to the date of the battle of Pollentia there is really no conflict of testimony whatever. Scholars have chosen to make certain inferences from the highly rhetorical, unchronological poems of Claudian, and cannot make these inferences fit with those dates, but if they had taken the dates from the generally accurate Prosper, and then interpreted the poet according to them, they would have found no difficulty. They say that Claudian's '*De Bello Getico*' was written in 403, and as it closes rather abruptly with the battle of Pollentia, it must have been written immediately after that event. But other poems of Claudian's end abruptly, evidently not from lack of material, but rather, as we may suppose, because the poet felt that he was giving too many hexameters for his patron's money. And why must it have been written in 403? Because he says in the Prologue

<sup>1</sup> It is fair to mention that even Cassiodorus builds so much on Prosper that he can hardly be claimed as an independent authority; but the sanction set upon Prosper's work by such a man as Cassiodorus, the first statesman and one of the most learned men of his age, separated by only a generation from the events narrated at the close of the work, is surely an important fact.

NOTE I. that his Muse is beginning to bestir herself, 'post resides annos,' his last preceding poems having been written for the First Consulship of Stilicho. As that Consulship was in 400, and the poems must have been on the anvil in the autumn of 399, if he had his 'De Bello Getico' completed, and the prologue to it written in the autumn of 402, that would make an interval of three years between the two poems. Was not three years a long time for a poet like Claudian to survive without flattering anybody? Looking to the character and position of the man, I am, still, more perplexed by his three years of silence than astonished that they should seem long to him in the retrospect.

The date 403 seems to have originally obtained currency from a simple mistake on the part of Baronius, a mistake fully acknowledged by Tillemont (v. 804). Prosper's date having once been set aside, other reasons were found for supporting the generally received conclusion, instead of going back to the beginning and admitting that a competent witness had been disallowed on insufficient grounds.

While, therefore, by no means pleading for the unfailing accuracy of Prosper's dates, I cannot but think that, as far as our present evidence goes, we must accept his statement that 402 was the date of the battle of Pollentia.

Incidentally also it may be remarked that Prosper's mention of Radagaisus as the ally of Alaric in his first invasion, has hardly received the attention which it deserves. As Pallmann says, 'Diese Stelle in Prosper's Chronik ist von der Kritik sehr stiefmütterlich behandelt worden.' His notice of Radagaisus again in 405 shows that there is no jumbling up of the events of those two years, and as I have endeavoured to indicate in the text (following Pallmann's guidance) the history of the years from 400 to 402 is simplified, not entangled, by the hypothesis (partly, no doubt, conjectural) of a combined attack by Radagaisus upon Rhaetia and by Alaric on Venetia.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE FALL OF STILICHO.

#### Authorities.

##### *Sources:—*

OUR chief authorities for the Italian part of our story are ZOSIMUS and OROSIUS. The latter is aglow with the fierceness of religious hatred. The former has apparently two or three different accounts before him, and his attempts to piece them together produce an incoherent story, the chief actors in which behave with childish inconsistency.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

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For that part of the history which relates to events in Gaul our authorities are, in addition to the two mentioned above, PROSPER, SOZOMEN, and OLYMPIODORUS. The last authority will be more fully described in a future chapter. It is sufficient here to state that he was a contemporary, that we have only fragments of his work, but that it was probably accessible in its complete state, to Zosimus and Sozomen, and has supplied them with some of their most valuable materials.

##### *Guides:—*

For all that belongs to the history of the usurper Constantine, I am now able to refer to a very complete and exhaustive monograph by Professor Freeman, in the *English Historical Review* (I. 53–86). This article, entitled ‘The Tyrants of Britain, Gaul and Spain,’ contains doubtless the final verdict of historical science on the transactions of an obscure and difficult period, and I accept with confidence almost all the conclusions contained in it, referring my readers to the article itself for a detailed statement of the argument.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

406.

Critical  
state of the  
Empire.

THE invasion of Alaric and Radagaisus had been repelled, and it might seem that the throne of Honorius was established on a more secure basis than ever. In fact, however, the events of 406 and the years immediately following it, brought not only the throne of Honorius but the whole Roman Empire nearer to irretrievable ruin than it had ever been brought before. By three diseases, each one of which seemed as if it might prove fatal, was that Empire at once assailed, (1) by barbarian invasion, (2) by military mutiny, and (3) by discord between the Eastern and Western realms.

Irruption  
of barba-  
rians into  
Gaul.

1. The desperate necessities of the defence of Italy had compelled Stilicho, as we have seen, to leave the long Rhine frontier of Gaul almost bare of troops. Claudian dared to boast of this.

‘Nor Britain only sends to aid our war;  
They who the yellow-haired Sicambrian bar,  
They who the Cattian, the Cherusker tame,  
Hither have brought the glory of their name:  
And fear alone now guards the Rhenish shore  
Paced by the Roman sentinel no more.  
Will future days believe it? She the bold  
Impetuous Germany whom Caesars old,  
With all their legions scarcely could restrain,  
Now in her docile mouth receives the rein.  
Held by the hand of Stilicho, nor dares  
To tempt the rampart which he proudly bares  
Of its accustomed garrison, nor dreams  
To cross with plundering bands the guardless streams<sup>1</sup>’

But Claudian boasted too soon : and it may perhaps have been foolish vapourings such as these, attributing to plan and policy on Stilicho’s part what was really

<sup>1</sup> De Bello Getico, 419-429.

due to dire need, which suggested to the great statesman's enemies the hateful, and in my belief, utterly groundless accusation that he actually invited the barbarians across the Rhine, in order, in some mysterious and inexplicable way, to facilitate his schemes for obtaining the diadem for the young Eucherius. But whatever the cause, the result is manifest. On the last day of 406 a great host of barbarians, consisting chiefly of three races, the Vandals, the Suevi, and the Alans (the first two Teutonic, the third probably of what we call 'Tartar' or Turanian origin), crossed the Rhine, and in one wide, desolating stream, poured over the fruitful province of Gaul, which from this time forward was never free from barbarian occupation<sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
406.

2. We shall have occasion hereafter to trace the fortunes of some of the barbarous tribes who thus poured into Gaul. At present we are more concerned with the indirect consequences of the invasion, the military mutiny and civil war which resulted from it. There had no doubt been for years a growing dissatisfaction with the rulers of the Empire. Reports of the

Disaffection in the  
army of  
Britain.

<sup>1</sup> The chief authority for the date is Prosper, 'Arcadio VI et Probo Coss [=406] Vandali et Alani Gallias, trajecto Rheno, pridie Kal. Januarias [31 Dec.] ingressi.' Some authors, struck by the awkwardness of introducing such a notice under the last day of the year (since the irruption as an event would belong far more to the New Year than to the Old) understand the invasion to have taken place on the last day of 405. But it is doubtful whether this is allowable, though the two edicts of 18th and 20th April, 406, 'De Tironibus,' calling for a *levée en masse* against some invader, certainly incline us towards the earlier date. It might to some extent lessen the difficulty if there were any authority for the conjecture (mentioned by Clinton) that for 'Jan.' we should read 'Jun.' (=31 May, 406). It seems in itself improbable that a great national migration such as this should take place in the depth of winter.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

406.

utter imbecility of Honorius had doubtless gone abroad, and the avarice and ambition of Stilicho would be freely discussed by the many disappointed competitors through whom he had shouldered his way to supreme dominion. Under the Imperial system of Rome as under the imitations of it which have been seen in later days, the usual penalty of ill-success was dethronement. Where the liegemen of a Constitutional King change a Ministry, the subjects of an elected Emperor upset a dynasty: and we who have heard the shouts of *déchéance* ring through the streets of Paris on the morrow of the surrender of Sedan, can understand what angry criticisms, what schemes of mutiny and revolt were heard in *Colonia* and camp when it became manifest that the Empire was going to pieces under the rule of the incapable Honorius.

It was of course in Britain, that 'province fertile in usurpers<sup>1</sup>,' that the criticisms were the loudest and the temper of the troops most mutinous. It was hard enough that the soldier should be doing outpost duty for Rome amid biting winds and sweeping snow-storms, on desolate moorlands a thousand miles from the nearest vineyard, without the added bitterness of knowing that his own Gaulish home was being trampled into ruin by Vandal freebooters, and all through the idiocy of the Augustus or the supposed treachery of that other Vandal who stood nearest to his throne<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Britannia fertilis provincia tyrannorum* (Jerome, *Epist. ad Ctesiphontem*).

<sup>2</sup> Zosimus (vi. 3) distinctly asserts that the Vandal irruption into Gaul was the cause of the insurrection of the soldiers in Britain. The 40th chapter of the '*Notitia Occidentis*' discloses the names of ten Gaulish detachments serving in Britain: three cohorts of Nervii from

Under the influence of these emotions the soldiers who still remained in Britain broke out into open mutiny, and, to legalize their position, acclaimed a certain Marcus as Emperor. But Marcus failed to lead them as they desired. He was slain, and his successor Gratian (a native of Britain) after a reign of four months, shared the same fate. Then the choice of the captious king-makers fell on a private soldier named Constantine, a man apparently of lower social position than either of his two predecessors. But he had a fortunate name, for a Constantine acclaimed a hundred years before in the same tumultuous fashion had won the Empire of the world; and in truth this later Constantine, though he seems to have had little but his name to recommend him, did make himself for a time lord of all that was left to Rome of the great Prefecture of the Gauls, and did wring from the reluctant Honorius a recognition as a legitimate Augustus.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

406.  
Elevation  
of Constan-  
tine.

407.

Very difficult and obscure is the story of the four years' reign of Constantine, a story which the reader turns from with impatience, because he knows that it leads to nothing, and because it distracts his attention from the far more important events which were passing at the same time in Italy. The soldier-Emperor crossed to Boulogne in the year 407, taking with him the last remnants of the Roman army of Britain. Whether he fought the barbarian invaders of Gaul is doubtful. It seems more probable that he made some kind of com-

Constan-  
tine in  
Gaul.

the Forest of Ardennes, two of Lingones from Langres, the Frixagores (?) from Friesland, the Batavians from Holland, the Tungri from the banks of the Meuse, 'the fourth cohort of Gauls' (origin uncertain), and the Morini from Flanders.



BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

407.

Sarus the  
Goth sent  
to oppose  
him.

pact with them, leaving them free to ravage the west and centre of Gaul while he marched down the valley of the Rhone, adding city after city to his dominion, and gradually getting the whole machine of Imperial administration into his hands.

When tidings of the British soldiers' usurpation reached the Court of Ravenna, an army was sent into Gaul to check his further progress. It is characteristic of the strange state of confusion into which the Empire was falling, that the general who commanded the army thus sent forth to vindicate the cause of Imperial legitimacy was the Gothic captain Sarus. Sarus seems to have fought well and bravely, though with less regard for his plighted word than a Teuton chieftain should have shown. Of the two masters of the soldiery whom the upstart Emperor deputed in lordly fashion to fight his battles for him, one (Justinian) was defeated and killed in fair encounter, the other, a man evidently of barbarian descent, named Neviogast, was lured by pretext of friendship into the Imperial camp and treacherously slain in violation of the plighted oath of Sarus. Constantine himself was besieged in the strong city of Valentia (*Valence*) by the Rhone, and it seemed as if his reign would end while his purple robe was still new. But the activity and warlike skill of his two new *magistri*, Edovich the Frank and Gerontius the Briton, quickly changed the face of affairs, and compelled Sarus to raise the siege of Valentia and to beat a precipitate retreat. The Bagaudae, a band of armed peasants whom we shall meet with again fifty years later, and who waged a war of centuries against the Roman government in Gaul, held the passes of the Alps, and it was only by abandoning to them all his

hardly won booty that Sarus could buy permission to return crest-fallen and empty-handed to his Imperial employer.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
407.

Thus the fortunes of the so strangely lifted up British soldier went on prospering. He sent his son Constans (a son who had turned monk but was drawn forth from the monastery by the splendour of his father's fortunes) into Spain in order to win that province, which generally followed the fortunes of its Gaulish neighbour. In Spain, however, pride in the Theodosian line and loyalty to the Theodosian house were still powerful sentiments. Two brothers, kinsmen of Honorius, named Didymus and Verenianus, upheld for a time the banner of their family in the Lusitanian plains and on the passes of the Pyrenees. But their army, hastily raised from among the slaves and peasants on their estates, could not permanently make head against the trained soldiers led by Constans, who by a curious paradox of nomenclature were chiefly composed of some of those *Auxilia Palatina* who bore the name of Honorians<sup>1</sup>.

Constans,  
son of Con-  
stantine,  
in Spain.

<sup>1</sup> I venture to take a slightly different view of these 'Honorians' to that which seems generally to have obtained currency on the authority of Gibbon (ch. xxx. n. 99). He says that in order to cope with Didymus and Verenianus and their brothers, Constantine 'was compelled to negotiate with some troops of barbarian auxiliaries for the service of the Spanish war. . . . They were distinguished by the title of Honorians, a name which might have reminded them of their fidelity to their lawful sovereign. These Honoriani or Honoriaci consisted of two bands of Scots or Attacotti, two of Moors, two of Marcomanni, the Victores, the Ascarii and the Gallicani. (Notitia Imperii, sect. xxxviii, edit. Lab.) They were part of the sixty-five *Auxilia Palatina*, and are properly styled ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τάξεις by Zosimus (vi. 4). The nine bands of Honorians, which may be easily traced on the establishment of the Western Empire, could not exceed the number of 5000 men,' &c.

The passage in Orosius from which we derive our knowledge of the

BOOK I. Didymus and Verenianus were defeated, and with their  
CH. 16.  
407. wives were taken prisoners and sent to the Court of

Constantine is recognised by Honorius as a colleague.  
409.

Constantine, which was now held at Arles, in a certain sense the capital of Gaul. The Spanish campaign seems to have been ended in 408, and in the following year an embassy was sent by Constantine to Honorius, claiming recognition as a lawful partner in the Empire, while throwing all the blame of Constantine's unlicensed assumption of the purple on the rude importunity of the soldiery. Honorius who, as we shall hereafter see, was at this time sore pressed by Alaric, and who trembled for the safety of his Spanish kinsfolk, captives as he supposed in the hands of Constantine, consented, and sent, himself, the coveted purple robe to the fortunate soldier in his palace at Arles. But the concession came too late to save the lives of Didymus and

employment of the 'Honorians' in the Spanish campaign is as follows, 'Adversus hos Constantinus Constantem filium suum . . . cum Barbaris quibusdam, qui quondam in foedus recepti atque in militiam allekti Honoriaci [Al. Honoriani] vocabantur, in Hispanias misit' (vii. 40). I have no doubt that Gibbon is right in connecting this statement of Orosius with the entries in the Notitia as to *Auxilia Palatina* bearing the name of Honoriani, and the names of the different 'bands' seem to be correctly given, though two more might have been added (the 'Felices' senior and junior). But I think he is in error in supposing that these various 'Honorian' bands formed one division of the army or ever necessarily acted together. In the Notitia some of them appear in Gaul, some in Italy, some in Illyricum, some even 'per Orientem.' Just so in the early Empire two legions were called 'Augusta' and two 'Primigenia,' but there was no necessary bond of connexion between them. All that we can say is that one or more *Auxilia Palatina* which were stationed in Gaul, and which bore the epithet *Honoriani*, were put under the command of Constans, and being barbarians behaved (as Orosius goes on to complain) in a very barbarous manner. The passage quoted from Zosimus has, I conceive, nothing to do with *Auxilia Palatina*.

Verenianus, who had been already put to death by their ungenerous conqueror.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

409.

Here for a little while we must leave the story of the British usurper, which has already brought us down to a somewhat later date than we have reached in the affairs of Italy. But it is important to remember that in the three years which we have thus rapidly surveyed, the whole noble Prefecture of the Gauls, that is to say, the three fair countries of Britain, Gaul and Spain, have been lost to Honorius. We shall hereafter see what fragments of them, if any, might be yet recovered for the Empire.

3. Lastly, as if all these calamities were not enough, there was added to them the fact of estrangement and the danger of actual war between the Eastern and Western portions of the Empire. We have already seen how the successive ministers of Arcadius resented the claim of Stilicho to exercise some kind of moral guardianship over both the sons of Theodosius. Now, from 404 onwards, the events connected with the persecution of Chrysostom by the Court party had deepened and widened the gulf between the two governments. Pope Innocent, when appealed to by the oppressed prelate, had warmly espoused his cause, and had called upon Theophilus of Alexandria to cease from his uncanonical intermeddling with the affairs of an alien see. Honorius, acting probably under the Pope's advice, had addressed a letter to Arcadius full of regret at the lamentable events which common rumour informed him had taken place in his brother's dominions—the burning of the Cathedral, the harsh measures adopted towards a father of the Church. The reflections as to the impropriety of Caesar's interference with the affairs of the

Estrangement between Arcadius and Honorius.



BOOK I. Church of God were orthodox and judicious, and might  
 CH. 16.  
 406. perhaps have been listened to with patience had the great Ambrose still been alive to utter them : but when put forward by a younger brother, and such a younger brother as Honorius, they goaded even the lethargic Arcadius to fury. The ecclesiastics sent by Honorius to urge upon his brother the assembling of a General Council were treated with a discourtesy which the law of nations would have condemned had they been the ambassadors of a hostile power. They were arrested at Athens, despatched under military escort to Constantinople, forbidden to land there, and sent off to a fortress in Thrace. Here they were shamefully handled, and their letters were taken from them by force. At length after four months' absence they were contemptuously dismissed on their homeward journey, without having once seen the Emperor of the East, or had any opportunity to deliver their message.

407.  
 Stilicho's  
 plans of  
 revenge.

This deadly insult caused Stilicho to form on behalf of his son-in-law the most extraordinary schemes of revenge and ambition. Alaric, so lately the enemy of Italy, was now to be made her champion. He and Stilicho were to enter on a joint campaign for the conquest of the whole of Eastern Illyricum, that is, presumably, all of what is now called the Balkan Peninsula, except Moesia and Thrace ; and Arcadius was to be left with only the 'Orient' for his share of the Empire. Stilicho was actually on the point of starting from Ravenna on this strange expedition when he was stopped by the receipt of two pieces of news : one false, that Alaric had died in Illyricum ; the other true and of necessity profoundly modifying his plans, the victorious march through Gaul of the usurper Constantine.



Another measure taken by Stilicho at this time shows how thunderous was the atmosphere in the Council-chamber at Ravenna. The ports and harbours of Italy were watched to prevent any one, even apparently a peaceful merchant, from landing if he came from the Eastern realm<sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
408.

But civil war between East and West was not to be added to the other miseries of the time. On the 1st of May, 408, Arcadius died, and that death, though it perhaps saved the Eastern Empire from ruin, brought about the fall of Stilicho, and by no remote chain of causes and effects, the sieges and sack of Rome. After the death had happened, but before certain tidings of it had reached the capital, Alaric, who had actually entered Epirus (but whether as invader or ally neither he himself nor any contemporary statesman could perhaps have accurately explained), marched northwards to Aemona (*Laybach*), passed without difficulty the unguarded defiles of the Julian Alps, and appearing on the north-eastern horizon of Italy, demanded pay for his unfinished enterprise. The Emperor, the Senate, Stilicho, assembled at Rome to consider what answer should be given to the ambassadors of the Visigoth. Many senators advised war rather than peace purchased by such disgraceful concessions. Stilicho's voice, however,

Death of  
Arcadius.

Debate in  
the Senate  
on Alaric's  
claims.

<sup>1</sup> We know of this embargo only from the law repealing it which was passed after Stilicho's downfall. 'Hostis publicus Stilicho novum atque insolitum repererat, ut litora et portus crebris vallaret excubiis ne cuiquam ex Oriente ad hanc Imperii partem pateret accessus. Hujus iniquitate rei moti et ne rarior sit diversarum mercium commeatus, praecipimus hac sanctione ut litorum desistat ac portuum perniciosam custodia et eandi ac redeundi libera sit facultas' [11 Dec. 408]. Cod. Theod. vii. 16. 1. I owe this important reference to Dr. Gùldenpenning.

BOOK I. was all for an amicable settlement. 'It was true that  
(Ch. 16.  
 408. Alaric had spent many months in Epirus. It was for the interest of the Emperor that he had gone thither; here was the letter of Honorius which had forbidden the enterprise, a letter which he must confess he attributed to the unwise interference of his own wife Serena, unwilling as she was to see her two adopted brethren at war with each other.' Partly persuaded that Alaric really deserved some reparation for the loss he had sustained through the fluctuation of the Imperial counsels, but more unwilling to oppose a courageous 'no' to the advice of the all-powerful Minister, the Senate acquiesced in his decision, and ordered payment of 4000 pounds of gold (about £160,000 sterling) to the ambassadors of Alaric. The Senator Lampridius, a man of high birth and character, exclaimed indignantly, '*Non est ista pax sed pactio servitutis*' (That is no peace, but a mere selling of yourselves into slavery). But, fearing the punishment of his too free speech, as soon as the Senate left the Imperial palace, he took refuge in a neighbouring Christian church.

The position of Stilicho was at this time one of great apparent stability. Though his daughter, the Empress Maria, was dead, her place had been supplied by another daughter, Thermantia, who, it might reasonably be supposed, could secure her feeble husband's loyalty to her father. With Alaric for his friend, with Arcadius, who had been drilled by his ministers into hostility, dead, it might have seemed that there was no quarter from whence danger could menace the supremacy of the great minister.

Insecurity  
 of Stili-  
 cho's posi-  
 tion.

This security, however, was but in appearance. Honorius was beginning to chafe under the yoke;

perhaps even his brother's death made Stilicho seem less necessary to his safety. An adverse influence too of which the minister suspected nothing, had sprung up in the Imperial court. Olympius, a native of some town on the Euxine shore, had ascended, through Stilicho's patronage, to a high position in the household. This man, who, according to Zosimus, 'under the appearance of Christian piety concealed a great deal of rascality,' was now whispering away the character of his benefactor. With him seem to have co-operated the clergy, who sincerely disapproved of Honorius' marriage with the sister of the late Empress, and who also had imbibed a strange notion that Eucherius, the son of Stilicho, was a Pagan at heart, and meditated, should he one day succeed to power, the restoration of the ancient idolatry.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

408.

Intrigues  
of Olym-  
pius.

Strange to say, the Pagans also had their reasons for disliking the same all-powerful family. They still muttered to one another an old story of the days of the first Theodosius. During one of his visits to Rome (Zosimus says immediately after the defeat of Eugenius) he turned out the priests from many of the temples. Serena, with haughty contempt for the votaries of the fallen faith, visited, in curious scorn, the temple of Rhea, the Great Mother of the Gods. Seeing a costly necklace hung around the neck of the goddess, she took it off and placed it on her own. An old woman, one of the surviving Vestal Virgins, saw and loudly blamed the sacrilegious deed. Serena bade her attendants remove the crone, who, while she was being hurried down the steps of the temple, loudly prayed that all manner of misfortunes might light upon the head of the despiser of the goddess, on her husband,

Pagans as  
well as  
Christians  
disliked  
the family  
of Stilicho.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

408.

and her children. And in many a night vision, so said the Pagans, from that day forward, Serena had warnings of some inevitable doom. Nor was Stilicho free from like blame, for he had stripped off the massive gold plates from the doors of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; and he, too, had had his warning, for the workmen to whom the task was allotted had found engraven on the inner side of the plates, '*Misero regi servantur*' (Reserved for an unhappy ruler).

Soreness of  
the Roman  
legionaries.

Thus did the two religions, the old and the new, unite in muttered discontent against the great captain. The people also, wounded and perplexed by the strange scene in the Senate, and the consequent payment to Alaric, had perhaps lost some of their former confidence in the magic of his name. On the other hand, the army, whose demoralised condition was probably the real cause of his policy of non-resistance, and whom his stern rule had alone made in any measure efficacious against the barbarian, were some of them growing restive under the severity of his discipline. Partly too we can discern the workings of a spirit of jealousy among the Roman legionaries against the Teutonic comrades by whom they found themselves surrounded, and often outstripped in the race for promotion. Stilicho's own Vandal origin would naturally exacerbate this feeling, and would render unpardonable in him preferences which might have been safely manifested by Theodosius. At Ticinum (the modern Pavia) the troops were thoroughly alienated from Stilicho; and at Bologna, whither Honorius had journeyed from Ravenna, the soldiers broke out into open mutiny. Stilicho, being summoned by the Emperor, suppressed the revolt, and either threatened or actually inflicted

the dread punishment of decimation, the *ultima ratio* of a Roman general.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

In the midst of this quicksand of suspicions and disaffections three facts were clear and solid. The usurper Constantine was steadily advancing through Gaul towards the capital. Alaric, though he had received the 4000 golden *librae*, hovered still near the frontier, and was evidently wearying for a fight with some enemy. Arcadius was dead: the guardianship of the little Theodosius was a tempting prize, and one which the dying words of his grandfather might possibly be held to confer upon the great Vandal minister. Honorius proposed to journey to the East, and assume this guardianship himself; but Stilicho drew out so formidable an account of the expenditure necessary for the journey of so majestic a being, that the august cipher, who was probably at heart afraid of the dangers of the way, abandoned his project. Stilicho's scheme, we are told, was to employ Alaric in suppressing the revolt of Constantine, while he himself went eastwards to settle the affairs of the young Emperor at Constantinople. Honorius gave his consent to both parts of the scheme, wrote the needed letters for Alaric and Theodosius, and then set off with Olympius for Ticinum. The minister, conscious that he was beset by some dangers, but ignorant of the treachery of Olympius, neither removed the mutinous soldiery from Ticinum, nor set forth to assume the command of the armies of the East, but, with strange irresolution, lingered on still at Ravenna. That irresolution proved his ruin.

408.  
Warring  
ambitions  
of Con-  
stantine,  
Alaric, and  
Stilicho.

For Olympius, having now sole access to the ear of Honorius, and being surrounded by an army already sore and angry at the very mention of the name of

Olympius  
fires his  
train.



BOOK I. Stilicho, had found exactly the opportunity for which  
 CH. 16. he had long been watching. Although the one point  
 408. in his enemy's life which was least open to hostile  
 comment was his conduct in reference to his son,  
 although Eucherius had never been promoted beyond  
 the modest office of Tribune of the Notaries<sup>1</sup>, Olympius  
 persuaded both the Emperor and the army that Stilicho  
 aimed at nothing less than placing his son on the  
 Eastern throne, to which presumably his own barbarian  
 parentage prevented him from aspiring. It is easy to  
 imagine how the courtier, who, 'under an appearance  
 of Christian piety veiled every kind of wickedness,'  
 would enlarge to the Emperor on the horror of seeing  
 the young pagan Eucherius on the throne of the holy  
 Arcadius;—to the soldiers on the prospect of endless  
 hardships under the stern discipline of Stilicho, when  
 he should have made himself master of both realms.

Mutiny at  
 Ticinum.

The bonds of military obedience, hard to bind, are  
 easy to unloose when Authority itself is foolish enough  
 to invite to mutiny. The soldiers at Ticinum rose in  
 fury, eager to lay murderous hands on all who were  
 pointed out to them as friends of Stilicho. Their first  
 victims were Limenius, the Praetorian Prefect of the  
 Gauls, and Chariobaudes, the commander of the forces  
 in the same provinces. But lately these two men had  
 been, under the Emperor, supreme from the Northum-  
 brian Wall to the Pillars of Hercules. Now, fugitives  
 before the might of the usurper Constantine, they

<sup>1</sup> He would, it seems, be thus enrolled in the third class of the  
 official hierarchy, the *Clarissimi*, and would have a similar position to  
 that of the clerks in the War Office with us. If the inscription pre-  
 viously quoted be authentic, the poet Claudian had received similar  
 promotion.

received the reward of their fidelity, death from the soldiers of their Emperor, in his presence and ostensibly at his bidding. The storm grew more furious; the Emperor cowered in his palace; the magistrates of the city took flight; the brutal soldiery rushed through the streets robbing and murdering at their will. The authors of the insurrection, terrified by their own success, resorted to the desperate remedy of parading Honorius through the town, dressed hastily in the short tunic of a private citizen without the military cloak (*paludamentum*) which marked his rank as a commander, and without the diadem of an Emperor. In answer to their abject supplications, order was at length restored, and the soldiers returned to their quarters; but not until Naemorius, the General of the Household Troops, with two other military officers, till Petronius, the Chief Minister of Finance, and Salvius, the Quaestor (who struggled to the feet of the Emperor and vainly pleaded there for mercy); nay, not till the head of the whole official hierarchy, Longinianus, Praetorian Prefect of Italy, had been slain<sup>1</sup>. All these eight victims of the

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 32. It is not easy exactly to fit in the descriptions of these offices given by Zosimus with the Notitia. The two Praefecti Praetorio are clear. So is Salvius the Quaestor (Not. Occidentis, cap. x.). Petronius, 'who was over the treasury and had charge of the private property of the Emperor,' is most probably the 'Comes Sacrarum Largitionum,' though he might be only the 'Comes Rerum Privatarum.' Chariobaudes, 'general of the forces in the Gauls,' is probably 'Magister Equitum,' or 'Magister utriusque Militiae per Gallias.' Naemorius, ὁ τῶν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τάξεων μάγιστρος, is identified by Gibbon with the Magister Officiorum, but might possibly be the *Magister Peditum in Praesenti*. Vincentius, ὁ τῶν ἱππέων ἡγούμενος, would be the *Magister Equitum in Praesenti*; and the other Salvius, ὁ τῶν δομestikῶν τάγματος προεστῶς, Comes Domesticorum Equitum (or Peditum).

BOOK I. revolt belonged to the rank of Illustres, the highest  
 CH. 16. class of Imperial functionaries. But besides these, a  
 408. great and uncounted number of the private citizens of  
 Ticinum fell in this day's massacre.

Ancient  
 Ticinum  
 and modern  
 Pavia.

At the present day, Pavia, the successor of Ticinum, though rich in Lombard relics, has no buildings to show recalling the days when it was a Roman *municipium*. The Ticino, hurrying past the little town to join the Po, is crossed by a covered bridge of the fifteenth century. If you happen to visit the place on a day of *festa*, you see the blue-tunicked lads of the Italian army streaming across this bridge and through the high street of the town. The river and the army are there still: all else how greatly changed from that fierce day of August, 408, when Honorius, pale with fear, clothed in his short tunic, was hurried up and down through the streets of Ticinum, exploring an end of that mutiny for which he had given the watchword! The Lombard churches, S. Michele and S. Teodoro, gray with their vast multitude of years, stand, it may be, where the murdered Prefects and Quaestor had then their palaces; and these merry, good-humoured soldier-lads, who cover the pavement with their nut-shells and fill the air with their laughter, are the representatives of that fierce mob-army, drunk with blood as with wine, which swept from end to end of the city shouting for vengeance on the friends of Stilicho.

Stilicho's  
 loyalty  
 still  
 unchanged.

The best defence of Stilicho's loyalty is to be found in his own conduct when he heard of the mutiny at Ticinum. The news found him at Bologna: perhaps he had escorted the Emperor so far on his westward journey. He called a council of war, composed of the .

generals of the barbarian auxiliaries. All felt themselves alike threatened by this murderous outbreak of bastard Roman patriotism. The first report stated that the Emperor himself was dead. 'Then,' said all,—and Stilicho approved the decision,—'on behalf of the violated *sacramentum*, let us march and avenge his murder on the mutineers.' But when a more correct version of the events reached them Stilicho refused to avenge the massacre of his friends only, the Emperor being unharmed, and loudly declared that to lead barbarians to an attack on the Roman army was, in his opinion, neither righteous nor expedient.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
408.

To this resolution he steadfastly adhered, though the conviction forced itself upon his mind that Honorius was now incurably alienated from him. Then the barbarian generals, one by one, separated themselves from what they felt to be a doomed cause.

Sarus, the Goth, the antagonist of Constantine, who had fought under Stilicho's orders, now turned against his old chief, made a night attack on his quarters, slaughtered his still faithful Hunnish guards, but reached the general's tent only to find that he had taken horse and ridden off with a few followers for Ravenna. Not for the hand of the ungrateful Sarus was reserved that reward which Olympius was yearning to pay for the head of his rival.

Sarus  
turns  
against  
him.

Stilicho, though a fugitive, seems still to be more anxious for the safety of the Empire than for his own. As he passes city after city, where the wives and children of the barbarian soldiers are kept as hostages for their fidelity, he adjures the magistrates not on any pretence to allow one of the barbarians to enter. He reaches Ravenna: shortly after his arrival come mes-

Flight to  
Ravenna.



BOOK I. sengers bearing letters written by the Emperor, under  
 CH. 16. the steady pressure of Olympius, commanding that  
 408. Stilicho shall be arrested and kept in honourable confinement without bonds. Informed of the arrival of this mandate he took refuge by night in a Christian church. When day dawned the soldiers entered the building : on their solemn assurance, ratified by an oath, sworn in the presence of the Bishop, that the Emperor's orders extended not to his death but only to the placing him under guard, Stilicho surrendered himself. Once out of the sanctuary, and entirely in the power of the soldiers, he learned the arrival of a second letter from Honorius, to the effect that his crimes against the state were judged deserving of death. The barbarian troops, who yet surrounded him, his slaves, his friends, wished still to resist with the sword, but this he utterly forbade, and by threats, and the old still-lingering terror of his brow, he compelled his defenders to desist. Then, in somewhat of a martyr's spirit, and with a heart already broken by man's ingratitude, and weary of life, he offered his neck to the sword of the executioner, and in a moment 'that good gray head, which all men knew,' was rolling in the dust.

Arrest

and death  
 of Stilicho,  
 23 Aug.,  
 408.

Zosimus'  
 Epitaph on  
 Stilicho.

'So died,' says Zosimus (v. 34), 'the man who was more moderate than any others who bore rule in that time. And in order that those who are interested in the history of his end may know the date thereof exactly, it was in the consulship of Bassus and Philip-pus, the same year in which the Emperor Arcadius succumbed to destiny, the 10th day before the Kalends of September (23rd August, 408).'

Compari-  
 son to Wal-  
 lenstein.

The circumstances of Stilicho's death naturally recall



to our minds 'The Death of Wallenstein.' The dull, suspicious Honorius is replaced by Ferdinand II, Olym-  
pius by the elder Piccolomini, Sarus by Butler, Alaric  
by Wrangel, Stilicho himself by the great Duke of  
Friedland. Only let not the parallel mislead us as to  
the merits of the two chief actors. Wallenstein was  
at length disloyal to Ferdinand; Stilicho was never  
untrue to Honorius.

At the outset of his career, when recording the con-  
flict of testimony concerning him (this very same Zosi-  
mus being then the *Advocatus Diaboli*) it seemed  
necessary to say that we must wait for the close of  
his life before pronouncing our verdict on his character.  
That he was a brave and hardy soldier and a skilful  
general is virtually confessed by all. That his right  
hand was free from bribes and unjust exactions, only  
his flatterers assert, and we need not believe. That he  
was intensely tenacious of power, that he imposed his  
will in all things on the poor puppet Honorius, is clear,  
and also that the necessities of the State amply justified  
him in doing so. The murder of Rufinus may or may  
not have been perpetrated with his connivance. The  
death of Mascezel, Gildo's brother, must remain a  
mystery; but upon the whole it seems improbable  
that Stilicho was personally connected with it. The  
inveterate hatred which existed between him and each  
successive minister of Arcadius certainly hastened the  
downfall of the Empire, and it is difficult to believe  
that there might not have been a better understanding  
between them had he so desired. The accusations of  
secret confederacy with Alaric would seem mere calum-  
nies, if it were not for the painful scene in the Senate  
and Lampridius' indignant ejaculation '*Non est ista*

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
---  
408.

Summing  
up of the  
evidence as  
to Stilicho's  
character.

BOOK I.

CH. 16.

408.

*pax sed pactio servitutis.*' Without imputing actual disloyalty to Stilicho, we may perceive in him, ever after the terrible slaughter and doubtful combat of Pollentia, a disinclination to push Alaric to extremities, a feeling which seems to have been fully reciprocated by his great antagonist. Possibly some such involuntary tribute of respectful fear would have been mutually paid by Napoleon and Wellington had Waterloo been a drawn battle. Stilicho may also have remembered too faithfully that the East had given Alaric his first vantage-ground against Rome, and he may have been too ready to keep that barbaric weapon unblunted, to be used on occasion against Constantinople. Yet on a review of his whole life, when contemplating the circumstances of his death, pre-eminently when observing the immediate change which his removal from the chessboard produced upon the whole fortunes of the game, with confidence we feel entitled to say, 'This man remained faithful to his Emperor, and was the great defence of Rome.'

Orosius'  
vehement  
invective.

In order however to lay all the evidence fairly before the reader, it will be well to quote the following passage from Orosius, the most eloquent of the defamers of Stilicho. Observe how mildly and even with what approbation the reverend Spaniard speaks of the atrocious *pronunciamento* at Pavia.

'Meanwhile Count Stilicho, sprung from the stock of the unwarlike, greedy, perfidious, and crafty nation of the Vandals, thinking it but a small matter that he already wielded Imperial power under the Emperor, strove by fair or foul means to lift up into sovereign dignity his son Eucherius, who, according to common report, had been already from boyhood, and while in a

private station, meditating the persecution of the Christians. Wherefore when Alaric, with the whole nation of the Goths at his back, respectfully and respectably prayed for a fair and honourable peace, and some certain dwelling-place, by denying him in public the opportunity whether of peace or of war, but cherishing his hopes by a secret league, he reserved him and his people for the scaring and scarifying of the State (*ad terendam terrendamque rempublicam*). Furthermore, those other nations, unbearable in their numbers and strength, by which the provinces of Gaul and Spain are now oppressed, namely the Alans, the Sueves, the Vandals, together with the Burgundians, who obeyed the same simultaneous impulse,—all of these he gratuitously called to arms, removing their previous fear of the Roman name.

‘These nations, according to his design, were to hammer at the frontier of the Rhine and harass Gaul, the wretched man imagining that under such a pressure of surrounding difficulties he should be able to extort the Imperial dignity from his son-in-law for his son, and that then he should succeed in repressing the barbarous nations as easily as he had aroused them. Therefore, when this drama of so many crimes was made clear to the Emperor Honorius and the Roman army, the indignation of the latter was most justly aroused, and Stilicho was slain,—the man who, in order that one lad might wear the purple, had been ready to spill the blood of the whole human race. Slain too was Eucherius, who, in order to ingratiate himself with the Pagans, had threatened to celebrate the commencement of his reign by the restoration of temples and the overthrow of churches. And with these men

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

408.

Punish-  
ment of  
Stilicho's  
family and  
friends.

were also punished a few of the abettors of their criminal designs. Thus with very slight trouble, and by the punishment of only a few persons, the churches of Christ, with our religious Emperor, were both liberated and avenged.' (Orosius, Hist. vii. 38.)

So far the religious pamphleteer. Let us turn from his invective to history, and trace the immediate consequences of the death of Stilicho. The fall of his family and friends followed his as a matter of course. Eucherius fled to Rome and took refuge in a church there. The sanctity of his asylum was for some time respected, but before many months had elapsed he was put to death. Thermantia was sent back from the Imperial palace to her mother Serena. A law was passed that all who had held any office during the time of Stilicho's ascendancy should forfeit the whole of their property to the State. Heraclian, the actual executioner of the sentence upon Stilicho, was made general of the forces in Libya Major in the room of Bathanarius, brother-in-law of the late minister, who now lost both office and life. Cruel tortures, inflicted by the command of Olympius, failed to elicit from any of Stilicho's party the least hint of his having conceived any treasonable designs.

Cowardly  
revenge of  
the legion-  
aries on  
the *foe-  
derati*.

It is plain, however, that justly or unjustly the name of the deceased minister was connected with the policy of conciliation towards the barbarians and employment of auxiliaries from among them. As soon as the death of Stilicho was announced, the purely Roman legionaries rose and took a base revenge for the affronts which they may have received at the hands of their Teutonic fellow-soldiers. In every city where the wives and children of these auxiliaries were dwelling the



legionaries rushed in and murdered them. The inevitable result was, that the auxiliaries, a band of 30,000 men, inheriting the barbarian vigour, and adding to that whatever remained of Roman military skill, betook themselves to the camp of Alaric, and prayed him to lead them to the vengeance for which they hungered.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
408.

But it is a characteristic of the strange period upon which we are now entering (408-410) that no one of the chief personages seems willing to play the part marked out for him. Alaric, who had before crossed mountains and rivers in obedience to the prophetic voice, 'Penetrabis ad Urbem,' now, when the game is clearly in his hands, hesitates and hangs back. Honorius shows a degree of firmness in his refusal to treat with the barbarians, which, had it been justified by the slightest traces of military capacity or of intelligent adaptation of means to ends, and had his own person not been safe from attack behind the ditches of Ravenna, might have been almost heroic. And both alike, the fears of the brave and the courage of the coward, have one result, to make the final catastrophe more complete and more appalling.

Alaric's  
unexpected  
moderation.

Alaric sent messengers to the Emperor, saying that on receipt of a moderate sum he would conclude a treaty of peace with Rome, exchange hostages for mutual fidelity, and march back his whole host into Pannonia. Honorius refused these offers, yet made no preparation for war, neglected to avail himself of the services of Sarus, undoubtedly the greatest general left after the death of Stilicho, entrusted the command of the cavalry to Turpillio, of the infantry to Varanes, of the household troops to Vigilantius; men whose notorious incapacity made them the laughing-stock of every camp in Italy,

Honorius's  
refusal to  
treat.



BOOK I. and for himself (says Zosimus) 'placed all his reliance  
 CH. 16. on the prayers of Olympius.' Not quite all his reliance,  
 408. however, for he was at this time exceedingly busy as a  
 Laws lawgiver, placing on the statute-book edict after edict  
 against heretics and heathens. heresy.

Cod.Theod. Thus we find him decreeing in 407, 'We will per-  
 lib. xvi. secute the Manicheans, Phrygians, and Priscillianists  
 tit. v. 40. with deserved severity. Their goods shall be con-  
 fiscated and handed over to their nearest relatives  
 who are not tainted with the same heresy. They  
 themselves shall not succeed to any property by what-  
 ever title acquired. They shall not buy nor sell nor  
 give to any one, and everything in the nature of a will  
 which they make shall be void.'

In 408 (addressed to Olympius, Master of the Offices)  
 lib. xvi. —'We forbid those who are enemies of the Catholic  
 tit. v. 42. sect to serve as soldiers in our palace. We will have  
 no connection of any kind with any man who differs  
 from us in faith.' 'All our former decrees against the  
 lib. xvi. Donatists, Manicheans, and Priscillianists, as well as  
 tit. v. 43. against the heathens, are not only still to have the  
 force of law, but to be obeyed to the utmost.' 'The  
 lib. xvi. revenues belonging to the Pagan temples are to be  
 tit. x. 19. taken from them, the images pulled down, the altars  
 rooted up.' 'No feast or solemn observance of any  
 kind is to take place on the sites of the [old] sacrilegious  
 worship. The bishop is empowered to see to the execu-  
 tion of this decree.' 'No one who dissents from the  
 lib. xvi. priest of the Catholic Church shall have leave to hold  
 tit. v. 45. his meetings within any city or in any secret place in  
 our dominions. If he attempts it, the place of meeting  
 shall be confiscated and he himself driven into exile.'

In 409—‘A new form of superstition has sprung up under the name of Heaven-worship. If those who profess it have not within a year turned to the worship of God and the religion of Christ, let them understand that they will find themselves smitten by the laws against heretics.’

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.  
Cod.Theod.  
lib. xvi.  
tit. viii. 19.

In this same year, doubting apparently his own power to resist the pressure of his new minister (Jovius), he ordains that no edict which may be obtained from him in derogation of these anti-heretical laws shall have any force at all.

lib. xvi.  
tit. v. 47.

In 410—‘Let the houses of prayer be utterly removed<sup>1</sup>, whither the superstitious heretics have frequently crept to celebrate their rites, and let all the enemies of the holy law know that they shall be punished with proscription and death if they shall any longer attempt, in the abominable rashness of their guilt, to meet together in public.’

lib. xvi.  
tit. v. 51.

About twenty years after this time, we find Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, saying to the younger Theodosius, ‘Join me in destroying the heretics, and I will join you in destroying the Persians’; and it is probable that these recurring edicts against heathens and heretics, ever increasing in severity, seemed to Honorius the easiest means of wringing forth the favour of the Almighty and adjuring Him to clear the Empire from the barbarians.

Socrates,  
vii. 29.

It is curious to read, side by side with these decrees,

Case of the  
heathen  
Generidus.

<sup>1</sup> Or ‘Entirely abrogating that [previous] oracle [of ours: some previous edict], under cover of which superstitious heretics,’ &c. (This is Gothofred’s interpretation; but is not the version given in the text the more natural one? The words are ‘Oraculo penitus remoto quo ad ritus suos haereticae superstitiones obreperant.’)

BOOK I. the story of Generidus as told us by Zosimus (v. 46).  
 CH. 16.

He was a man of barbarian extraction; brave and honest, but still adhering to the religion of his forefathers. When the law was passed which forbade any one not a Christian to remain in the service of the Emperor, Generidus handed back his belt, the emblem of military office, and retired into private life. In a desperate crisis of his fortunes, the Emperor entreated him to return, and to take the command of the troops in Pannonia and Dalmatia. He reminded Honorius of the law which forbade a heathen like himself to serve the state, and was told that while that law must still remain in force, a special exemption should be made in his favour. 'Not so,' replied the soldier; 'I will not be a party to the insult thus put on all my brave heathen comrades. Restore them all to the rank which they have forfeited because they adhere to the religion of their forefathers, or else lay no commands upon me.' The Emperor with shame consented, and Generidus, assuming the command, drilled his troops rigorously, served out their rations honestly, spent his own emoluments among them generously, and soon became a terror to the barbarians and a tower of strength to the harassed provincials<sup>1</sup>. We do not hear of him, however, again

<sup>1</sup> Tillemont thinks that this affair of Generidus may be connected with a law of Honorius, referred to by the Council of Carthage, 'that no one should embrace the Christian religion except by his own free and voluntary choice.' 'Nothing,' says the good Abbé, naïvely, 'could be more just, and no one has ever claimed that a man should embrace Christianity in spite of himself. However, in the state in which things then were, such a law was equivalent to undoing all that had been done against the pagans and heretics, especially if at the same time the law excluding them from office, was repealed, as Zosimus assures us.' (*Hist. des Empereurs*, v. 574-5.)

in any of the great events of the war, and may be permitted to conjecture that Zosimus has coloured highly enough the virtues of his fellow heathen.

BOOK I.  
CH. 16.

The mention of this religious legislation may seem like a departure from the main subject of the chapter, but it is not so. The religious element was probably the most important factor in the combination which brought Stilicho to his fall, and it has had the most powerful influence in blackening his memory after his death. The intrigues of Olympius and the passionate calumnies of Orosius are not pleasant specimens of the new type of Christian politician and littérateur which was then coming to the front. The former especially is a style of character of which the world has seen too much in the subsequent centuries, and which has often confirmed the truth of a saying of the founder of Christianity. Salt like this, which had utterly lost its savour, was in a certain sense worse than anything which had been seen on the dunghill of Pagan Imperial Rome, and was fit for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Religious  
element in  
the hostile  
combina-  
tion against  
Stilicho.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### ALARIC'S THREE SIEGES OF ROME.

#### Authorities.

##### *Sources:—*

BOOK I. ZOSIMUS and OROSIUS are still our chief authorities (and most  
CH. 17. unsatisfactory ones) for the history of this eventful period. The  
408. narrative of Zosimus ends abruptly in 410, just before the final catastrophe.

The Epistles of ST. JEROME and ST. AUGUSTINE's great work 'De Civitate Dei' supply some important facts as to the capture of the City.

The death and burial of Alaric are described by JORDANES.

A FEW weeks were probably spent in the fruitless negotiations between Alaric and Honorius after the murder of Stilicho<sup>1</sup>. Then the Visigothic king decided to play the great game, and while it was still early autumn he crossed the Julian Alps and descended into the plains of Italy to try once more if that voice were true which was ever sounding in his ears, 'Penetrabis ad Urbem.' He left Aquileia and Ravenna unassailed. He would not now waste his strength and time over any smaller sieges; he would not attempt

<sup>1</sup> A messenger with despatches of importance would accomplish the journey between Ravenna and Laybach (the abodes of Honorius and Alaric) in five or six days at the outside.



to get the person of the Emperor into his power; he would press on to the city of cities, and would see whether, if he made Famine his ally, the services of that confederate might not counterbalance his own deficiencies in siege artillery. He crossed the river Po. No hostile force appeared in sight, and he was soon at Bologna, at Rimini, in the rich plains of Picenum. While he was thus proceeding by rapid marches towards Rome, laying waste all the open country, and plundering the towns and villages, none of which was strong enough to close its gates against him, a man in the garb of a monk suddenly appeared in the royal tent. The holy man warned him in solemn tones to refrain from the perpetration of such atrocities and no longer to delight in slaughter and blood. To whom Alaric replied, 'I am impelled to this course in spite of myself: for something within urges me every day irresistibly onwards, saying, Proceed to Rome and make that city desolate <sup>1</sup>.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.  
408.

His interview with a monk.

It would have confirmed the royal Visigoth in his belief of a Divine mission if he had been able, as he nearly was, by his rapid march to frustrate a dastardly crime. Two of the Imperial eunuchs, Arsacius and Terentius, who had the two children of Stilicho in their hands, were all but made prisoners by the Goths. They succeeded, however, in hurrying off with their captives to Rome, delivered up the divorced girl-empress Thermantia to her mother, and put the helpless lad Eucherius to death by order of the Emperor. On their return to court they were rewarded with the places of grand chamberlain and marshal of the

Eucherius put to death.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, vii. 10. This incident may have occurred during one of his subsequent marches to Rome.

BOOK I. palace<sup>1</sup>, 'for their great services,' as Zosimus bitterly  
 Ch. 17. remarks.

408.

Alaric's  
 First Siege  
 of Rome.

Alaric meanwhile pressed on, and soon, probably in the month of September, he stood before the walls of Rome and commenced his *First Siege of the city*.

Serena put  
 to death.

The actual appearance of the skin-clothed barbarians within sight of the Capitol, so long the inviolate seat of Empire, found the senate resourceless and panic-stricken. One only suggestion, the cruel thought of coward hearts, was made. Serena, the widow of Stilicho, still lived in Rome. Her husband had made a league with Alaric. Might not she traitorously open to him the gates of the city? Unable, apparently, among the million or so of inhabitants of Rome to find a sufficient guard for one heart-broken widow, they decreed that Serena should be strangled, and thus, as devout heathens observed with melancholy satisfaction, that very neck round which she had sacrilegiously hung the necklace of the Mother of the Gods was now itself encircled by the fatal cord.

Famine in  
 Rome.

But (as Zosimus sarcastically observes)<sup>2</sup> 'not even the destruction of Serena caused Alaric to desist from the blockade.' The course of the Tiber was watched so that no provisions should be brought into the city from above or from below. Soon Rome, the capturer of a hundred cities, began to understand for herself the pang of the old Jewish lawgiver's words of warning: 'And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy

<sup>1</sup> Τερέντιον μὲν ἔταξεν ἄρχειν τοῦ βασιλικοῦ κοιτῶνος [that is, no doubt, Honorius made him *praepositus sacri cubiculi*] ? Ἀρσακίῳ δὲ τὴν μετὰ τοῦτον ἔδωκε τάξιν [probably the office of *castrensis sacri palatii*]. Zosimus, v. 37.

<sup>2</sup> v. 39.

high and fenced walls come down wherein thou trustedst. . . And thou shalt have nothing left thee in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates<sup>1</sup>.

Day after day the citizens looked forth towards the north-eastern horizon expecting help from Ravenna, but it came not. The daily portion of food allotted to each citizen was reduced to one half, then to one third of its ordinary quantity. Two noble-hearted women, Laeta, widow of the Emperor Gratian, and her mother, who were entitled to draw a large maintenance from the public storehouses, did their utmost to relieve the distress of the citizens, but 'what were they among so many?'

To famine was added sickness, and then, when the surrounding enemy made it impossible to bury the dead outside the walls, the city itself became one vast sepulchre, and Pestilence arose from the streets and squares covered with decaying corpses.

At length, when the citizens had tried every other loathsome means of satisfying hunger, and were not far from cannibalism, they determined to send an embassy to the enemy. The Spaniard Basil, a governor of a province, and John, the chief of the Imperial notaries<sup>2</sup>, were selected for this duty. The reason for the choice of John was a strange one. A rumour, unaccountable except through that national vanity which could not admit that

followed by  
pestilence.

Embassy to  
Alaric.

'so supine

By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid,'

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy xxviii. 52, 55.

<sup>2</sup> Primicerius Notariorum, and possibly the same person who afterwards succeeded Honorius as Emperor. Both ambassadors were Spectabiles only. All the Illustres were no doubt safely sheltered at Ravenna.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

408.

had spread through the City that it was not the true Alaric, but one of the chiefs of the mutinous army of Stilicho, who was directing these operations against her. As John was acquainted with Alaric's person, and was indeed allied to him by the bonds of mutual hospitality, he was sent to solve this question.

The language which the ambassadors were directed to use had in it somewhat of the ring of the old world-conquering republic's voice, 'The Roman people were prepared to make a peace on moderate terms, but were yet more prepared for war. They had arms in their hands, and from long practice in their use had no reason to dread the result of battle.'

These swelling words of vanity only provoked the mirth of Alaric, who had served under the eagles, and knew what the Roman populace's 'practice in the use of arms' amounted to. With a loud Teutonic laugh he exclaimed, 'Thick grass is easier mowed than thin.' To the dainty patrician ambassadors the proverb was probably strange and unfamiliar: to Alaric it recalled the memory of many a spring morning when by the banks of the Danube he had swept his great scythe through the dewy grass, delighting in the patches where the green blades stood up, manifold, for the slaughter, growling at the constant toil of sharpening the steel where the thin and weedy grass bowed beneath the unavailing stroke.

Alaric's  
terms.

After much ridicule showered upon the ambassadors who had brought so magnanimous a message, business was resumed, and they contrived again to enquire as to the terms of a 'moderate peace.' The Goth's announcement of his conditions was, says Zosimus, 'beyond even the insolence of a barbarian.' 'Deliver to

me all the gold that your city contains, all the silver, all the moveable property that I may find there, and moreover all your slaves of barbarian origin: otherwise I desist not from the siege.' Said one of the ambassadors, 'But if you take all these things, what do you leave to the citizens?' Alaric, still in a mood for grim jesting, and thinking perhaps of the passage in his *Ulfilas*<sup>1</sup>, 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul,' or more probably of that passage in *Revelation*<sup>2</sup> where the merchandise of the great city is described, her purple and silk and scarlet, her cinnamon and odours and ointment, her fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, 'and horses and chariots and slaves and *souls of men*,' replied in one gruff word *saivalos*, 'your souls<sup>3</sup>.'

The ambassadors returned to the Senate with their message of despair, and with the assurance that it was indeed Alaric with whom they had to deal. The Senate, enervated by centuries of powerless sycophancy, found themselves compelled to look forth upon a horizon blacker than their heroic ancestors had seen after the terrible day of Cannae. In the dying state as in the dying man, when it was seen that human aid was impossible, religion, the power of the Unseen, rose

Reaction  
against  
Christi-  
anity.

<sup>1</sup> 'Wa auk boteith mannan, jabai gageigaith thana fairwu allana jah gasleitheit sik *saivalai seinai*.' Mark viii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> xviii. 12, 13.

<sup>3</sup> This passage is generally translated 'your lives.' Either rendering is correct, and equally so whether Alaric spoke in Greek and said *τὰς ψυχάς*, or in Gothic and said *saivalos*.

**ΣΑΙΥΛΛΑ** (*saivala* = Germ. *Seele*) is *soul* in Romans xiii. 1 ('Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers'), but *life* in Mark viii. 35 ('Whosoever will save his life shall lose it').



BOOK I. into dominion. The once fashionable Paganism, the  
 CH. 17. now fashionable Christianity, both of them fashions  
 408. rather than faiths, lightly held, lightly abandoned, still  
 divided the allegiance of the senators of Rome. Which,  
 oh which of them was true? Would Jove or Jesus  
 bring the yearned-for deliverance to the sacred city—  
 to the temple of Capitolinus, to the tombs of the  
 Apostles?

Of the feelings of the Christians at this time we have no sufficient description, but the heathen historian records, with almost Christian fervour, the despairing religiousness of the opposite party. 'Then indeed, when they were persuaded that it was in truth Alaric who warred against them, and when they had renounced all hope of aid from human power, they thought upon that [heavenly] succour which had hitherto accompanied the State through all her tribulations, and they perceived how they were now abandoned thereby, in consequence of having deserted the religion of their forefathers<sup>1</sup>.'

The sacrifices at Narni. Similar sacrifices recommended at Rome.

At this juncture, Pompeianus, the Prefect of the City, fell in with certain Tuscan visitors (how they had pierced the blockade we know not), who were full of the marvels which had been lately wrought at Narni in their own country<sup>2</sup>. There, they said, a series of prayers offered up to the Immortal Gods, and the performance of the old ancestral rites had been immediately followed by loud crashes of thunder and the fall of fire from heaven, which had so terrified the barbarians that they had at once raised the siege.

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Mendelssohn, the latest editor of Zosimus, reads *Napriav*, instead of *Νεβριαν*, the reading of the Bonn edition.

The holy books were consulted. They recommended, and the majority of the Senate were favourable to the proposition, that similar observances should be commenced in Rome. To make himself quite safe, however, Pompeianus (himself a Christian) appealed to the Bishop of Rome. This was Innocent I, one of the first great Popes, by no means wanting in energy of self-assertion either towards the Emperor or other Bishops. Yet even he, we are told, in this 'distress of nations and perplexity' which had fallen upon the world, 'preferring the safety of the city to his own private opinion, gave them leave to practise in secret the incantations which they knew.' The priests replied that no good result would follow unless the rites were *publicly* performed on the Capitoline Hill, with all the Senate as witnesses, in the Forum Boarium, in the Forum of Trajan, and elsewhere in all the public places of the city. The required permission was granted, but was not made use of. The believers, the half-believers, the would-be believers in the Olympian Dwellers were in too small a minority. Not one dared to perform the ancestral rites<sup>1</sup>. The lightning did not fall from heaven, but the city gates opened once more, and again a train of suppliant senators, this time with no pretence of menace in their tone, set forth to see what terms could be obtained from the mercy of the conqueror.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.  
408.

Pope Innocent is willing to stand aside.

But men dare not resume heathen sacrifices.

At length, after much discussion, Alaric consented to allow the city to ransom herself by a payment of

The ransom demanded by Alaric.

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 41; Sozomen, ix. 6. The ecclesiastical historian seems to agree with the pagan that the incantations were not actually performed: otherwise one would be inclined to suspect that Zosimus was glossing over a *coup manqué* on the part of the heathen priests.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

408.

5000 pounds weight of gold, 30,000 of silver<sup>1</sup>, 4000 silken tunics<sup>2</sup>, 3000 hides dyed scarlet, and 3000 pounds of pepper. It is a strange catalogue of the things which were objects of desire to a nation emerging from barbarism. The pepper suggests the conjecture that the Gothic appetite had already lost some of its original keenness in the fervent southern lands; and the numbers of the special articles of luxury prompt the guess (it is nothing more) that the nobles and officers of this great nation-army may have been about 3000, the extra 1000 of silken garments perhaps representing the wives and daughters who accompanied some of the great chiefs.

And so ended the *First* Gothic siege of Rome, a siege in which no swords were crossed, no blood drawn. Famine was the only weapon used by Alaric.

The question then arose, 'How were the great quantities of gold and silver named by Alaric to be provided?' Public money there was none in the exchequer: probably the sacred majesty of Honorius drew all the produce of the taxes to Ravenna. The senators, whose statement of their wealth was perhaps capable of tolerably exact verification, paid their contributions according to a prepared list. A revenue-officer named Palladius was appointed to collect the rest from the citizens who had still any property remaining; but, partly owing to the extortions of previous Emperors and their ministers, which had really reduced many wealthy men to poverty, partly to unpatriotic concealment of their riches by those who were still rich, he

<sup>1</sup> The 5000 lbs. of gold would be worth £225,000; the 30,000 lbs. of silver £90,000, nearly.

<sup>2</sup> χιτῶνες.

failed to collect the required sum. Then, under the influence of some avenging demon which metes out the destinies of men, a really fatal resolution (says Zosimus) was adopted; 'for they decided to make up the deficit by stripping off from the images of the gods the precious metals with which they were adorned. This was in fact nothing less than to deprive of life and energy, by diminishing the honour done to them, those statues which had been erected in the midst of solemn religious rites, and clothed with becoming adornment in order that they might ensure everlasting felicity to the state<sup>1</sup>. And since it was fated that from all quarters everything should concur to the ruin of the city, they not only stripped the statues of their adornments but they even melted down some of those which were composed of gold and silver, among which there was one of Valour (which the Romans call *Virtutem*<sup>2</sup>). And when this was destroyed, all that was left of Valour and Virtue among the Romans perished with it, as those who were learned in divine things and the rites transmitted from our ancestors perpetually asserted would be the case.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

408.

The images  
of the  
gods in the  
melting-  
pot.

After this matter of the payment was settled, the future relations between the people of Rome and the Gothic king came under discussion. No one hinted now (nor for two generations later) at making the barbarian ruler of any part of Italy. But to constitute

Can Alaric  
be re-en-  
listed as a  
confederate  
with  
Rome?

<sup>1</sup> This passage is worth quoting in the original, as curiously illustrating the theory of image-worship: ὅπερ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢν ἡ τὰ τελεταῖς ἀγίαις καθιδρυθέντα καὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος κόσμου τυχόντα διὰ τὸ φυλάξαι τῇ πόλει τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν αἰδίων, ἐλαττωθείσης κατὰ τι τῆς τελετῆς ἄψυχα εἶναι καὶ ἀνερέργητα. Zosimus, v. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Οὐιρτούτεμ.



BOOK I. him the permanent champion of Rome ; to conclude a  
 CH. 17. strict offensive and defensive alliance with one whose  
 408. sword weighed so heavily in the scale ; in fact to revert to and carry further the policy of Stilicho which these very Romans had probably been among the loudest in condemning,—this did seem to the Senate a wise recognition of existing facts, a chance of saving the majesty of Rome from further humiliation. And such doubtless it was ; and Theodosius himself, or the great Constantine, seeing Alaric's unfeigned eagerness for such an alliance would have concluded it with gladness. But all the endeavours of statesmanship were foiled by the impenetrable stolidity of Honorius, who could not make either war or peace, nor could comprehend the existence of any danger to the Empire so long as his sacred person was unharmed.

Tedious  
 minuteness  
 of Zosimus  
 as to the  
 events of  
 409.

This year 409 was glorified by the eighth Consulship of Honorius and the third of his young nephew Theodosius II. Though comparatively unimportant in the development of the great drama, it is described with almost provoking minuteness by our one chief authority, Zosimus. Would that as full and clear a light had been thrown upon the first and the last campaigns of Alaric, upon 402 and 410.

As was before remarked, no one, in this period of uncertainty and suspense, seems to play the part which is set down for him. As if the destruction of Rome were some mighty cataract towards which all were being drifted along by the irresistible current of events, the Goth, the Roman, the Emperor, the Senate, swim helplessly in the stream, first towards one shore, then towards another, and all their motions do not seem to alter the final result in a single circumstance. Alaric



himself undoubtedly had this conviction, that he was an instrument in the hand of a mightier power for the overthrow of Rome. Was the presentiment that he would be known to the nations as the Destroyer of Rome coupled with another presentiment that he himself would shortly after lay his bones on the Italian soil, and is this the clue to those stern and ruthless advances tempered by fits of such strange and unexpected moderation?

Immediately after the conclusion of the treaty of peace a vast number of domestic slaves fled from Rome, who, joining themselves to some of the wandering bands of barbarians, made up an army of 40,000 men, and levied a rude toll on the provisions and other merchandise arriving at Ostia for the relief of the city. As soon as Alaric heard of this event, which seemed to stain the purity of his plighted honour, he repressed the bands of pillagers with strong hand. At least his share of the compact should be kept while he waited calmly to see whether Honorius would ratify the other. The stipulation upon which at this time Alaric laid most stress in the negotiations was that hostages, the sons of some of the chief men in the Roman state, should be placed in his hands as security for the continuance of friendly relations between himself and the Empire.

The senate sent an embassy to the Emperor to represent to him the piteous condition of the Mistress of the World, and implore him to consent to the treaty with Alaric. Honorius tore himself away for a few hours from his poultry, heard apparently without emotion of the sufferings of his people, gave a step in official rank to two of the ambassadors, and declined their request.

BOOK I.

Ch. 17.

409.

Freebooter  
slaves at  
Ostia,

repressed  
by Alaric.

Fruitless  
embassy to  
Ravenna.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

409.

The  
blockade  
of Rome  
recom-  
menced.

As soon as the news of this refusal reached Alaric he recommenced the blockade of the city, not perhaps with all the old strictness, but with sufficient severity to make it difficult for the unsuccessful ambassadors to return. One of them, Attalus, now apparently Count of the Sacred Largesses, with great difficulty stole into the city at the same time with a routed general Valens, who had just flung away 6,000 picked troops in an unsuccessful attempt to relieve Rome. Another of the envoys was actually taken prisoner, and being sold for a slave was bought by his father for 30,000 aurei<sup>1</sup> (about £18,000). The name of this luckless ambassador, rare in Italy then, was to be only too fatally familiar to the Italy of a thousand years later. He was called Maximillian.

Defeat of  
Ataulfus,  
brother-in-  
law of  
Alaric.

Another embassy was sent by the Senate to Ravenna, and Pope Innocent I was associated with it, but we do not seem to be informed of its results. Just at this time Honorius was in a state of great elation, because Ataulfus, the brother-in-law of Alaric, who was hastening to join him with a body of troops collected in Upper Pannonia, had been defeated by a small army of Huns in the service of the Emperor. The Roman account of the engagement is that 300 Huns slew 1200 Goths, with a loss to themselves of only 17 men. This is probably an exaggeration, and it is clear that the great point, the junction of Ataulfus and Alaric, was not prevented. Still there was sufficient occasion for a momentary exultation on the part of Honorius in his interview with the Roman ambassadors.

<sup>1</sup> Here, as elsewhere, I interpret 'aureus' as equivalent to 'solidus aureus,' worth therefore about twelve shillings. The aureus of the earlier emperors fluctuated between fifteen and twenty-two shillings.

About this time occurred a revolution in the council chamber of the sovereign. Olympius' sole idea of government seems to have been confiscating the possessions of all who could possibly be suspected of Stilichonism, and endeavouring by torture to force them to confess their share in the conspiracy. Up to this time not a trace of any such conspiracy had been discovered; perhaps the public were growing a little weary of the cry against Stilicho, and contrasted the present position of affairs with that which had existed under the great minister: certainly the soldiers were dissatisfied with the miserable generals Turpillio and Vigilantius, whom the favour of Olympius retained in the highest military posts. The eunuchs of the palace employed against Olympius the same arts which he had used against Stilicho. Knowing the criminality of ill-success, he escaped to Dalmatia, and a certain Jovius<sup>1</sup> was appointed Praetorian Prefect, was clothed with the dignity of Patrician, became chief counsellor of Honorius, and drew all power into his own hands.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

409.  
Olympius  
supplanted  
by Jovius.

In order to wrest the military commands from the hands of the friends of Olympius, the mutiny of Ticinum was re-enacted on a smaller scale at Ravenna. The soldiers assembled on the shore hard by Classis, shouting in mob fashion that the Emperor must be made to

Another  
Pronuncia-  
mento.

<sup>1</sup> These Pagan names, Olympius and Jovius, at the eminently Christian court of Ravenna, are somewhat curious. Tillemont (v. 573) speaks too doubtfully of Jovius's profession of Christianity if, as seems probable, he is the same person who, as Count of Africa, overthrew the Pagan temples at Carthage and destroyed the idols in the year 399 (Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xviii. 54), and to whom, as Praetorian Prefect, in this year (409) Honorius addressed his decrees against apostates to heathenism and Judaism.

BOOK I. appear before them. Honorius of course concealed  
 CH. 17. himself, and Jovius, the real author of the sedition,  
 409. went to enquire with bland innocence the reason of all  
 this clamour and wrath. Turpillio and Vigilantius  
 were denounced by the infuriated soldiery. The  
 Emperor consented at once to a decree of perpetual  
 banishment being passed against them, and by the  
 secret orders of Jovius this punishment was commuted  
 into assassination at the hands of the officers of the  
 ship on board of which they had been placed. Other  
 changes were made in the household, but there is no  
 need to record the names of these tumultuary chiefs of  
 the civil and military service, of whom it may be said  
 that they 'sprang up in a night and perished in a night.'

Conference  
 at Rimini  
 between  
 Alaric and  
 Jovius.

Practically all power centred in Jovius, and Jovius,  
 as having overthrown the enemy of Stilicho, and also  
 as having been of old 'guest-friend'<sup>1</sup> of Alaric in  
 Epirus, had peculiar facilities for effecting that accom-  
 modation with the Visigothic king which the State  
 imperatively required. With the Emperor's consent  
 he invited Alaric to a conference, which was held at  
 Rimini, about thirty Roman miles from Ravenna. The  
 terms upon which the Goth was now willing to base  
 his alliance with the Emperor were these:—A yearly  
 payment of gold by Honorius; a supply of provisions,  
 the amount of which was to be the subject of future  
 negotiation; and the concession of the two divisions of  
 Noricum, and of Istria, Venetia, and Dalmatia for the  
 residence of the Gothic troops and their families<sup>2</sup>. It

<sup>1</sup> *πρόξενος* (Zosimus, v. 48).

<sup>2</sup> This concession would have given Alaric a solid block of territory  
 200 miles long by 150 wide, reaching from Passau to Venice and from  
 Vienna to Ragusa.



was not apparently intended that these regions should cease to be included, at least theoretically, in the dominions of the Roman Emperor, but rather that the Goths should be quartered there as permanent allies on the same terms on which many other auxiliary tribes had at various times been permitted to settle within the confines of the Empire.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

409.

In transmitting these demands to his master, Jovius gave a secret hint that probably if Alaric himself were gratified with some high official position, such as that of *Magister Utriusque Militiae*, he would be found willing to abate considerably from the stringency of his demands. To this Honorius replied,—and for once we do hear a man's voice, though not a wise man's,—‘You have behaved hastily in this matter. Payments of gold and subsidies of corn belong to your duty as Praetorian Prefect, and I do not blame you for having arranged these according to your own judgment. But military command it is mine alone to bestow, and I hold it unfitting that such offices as you name should ever be held by Alaric or any of his race.’

The concessions of Jovius vetoed by Honorius.

This letter arrived when Jovius and Alaric were conversing. Was it pique against the Emperor, was it despair, was it mere folly, that impelled the minister to read it from the beginning to the end in the hearing of the Visigoth? Alaric listened to all the rest of the letter patiently enough, but when he heard the scornful close he broke off the negotiations abruptly, and declared that he would revenge on Rome herself the insult offered to himself and his race.

Jovius, whose conduct is a perfect mystery of needless villainy, and who seems to us to behave like an Italian statesman of the sixteenth century who had

The oath by the head of the Emperor.



BOOK f. lost his Machiavel, rushed back to Ravenna, and in-  
 CH. 17. duced the Emperor to take an oath that he would  
 409. conclude no peace with Alaric, but would wage against him perpetual war. When Honorius had taken this oath, Jovius, touching the Emperor's head, repeated the same words, and all who held high office in the State were compelled to follow his example<sup>1</sup>. And yet every one of these men knew in his secret heart that a just and honourable peace with Alaric was the only chance of rescuing Rome from impending destruction.

Honorius made some feeble preparations for war, enrolled 10,000 Huns in his armies, imported cattle and sheep from Dalmatia for the provisionment of Ravenna, and sent some scouts to watch the progress of the Gothic army towards Rome.

Alaric still  
 hesitates.

But again Alaric, though duped and insulted, was seized by one of those strange qualms of awe or compassion which so often might have saved the Imperial City. 'Beginning to repent of his expedition against Rome, he sent forth the bishops of the cities through which he passed to act as his ambassadors, and to adjure the Emperor not to see unconcerned the City which had for more than a thousand years ruled over the greater part of the earth, given up to be sacked by

<sup>1</sup> Compare Genesis xlii. 16, 'Else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies.' Also the frequent persecutions of Christians for refusing to swear 'by the Genius of the [heathen] Emperor.' The same custom still prevails in the barbarian court of Christian Abyssinia. 'Every man fears and suspects his neighbour, and dreads the King. His name is literally one to conjure by. To swear or command in the name of Johannes is unanswerable and final. One continually hears the following oaths:—"By the backbone of John!" "By the God of John!" or "By the God of the horse of John!"'—(Journey to the Court of Abyssinia: *Daily News*, 21 June, 1884).

barbarians, nor yet such magnificent buildings destroyed by hostile fire, but rather to arrange a peace on very moderate conditions<sup>1</sup>. He offered in fact to abate three provinces, Venetia, Istria, and Dalmatia, from his former demand, and to be satisfied with the two Noricum alone<sup>2</sup>, provinces already so wasted by barbarian invasions as to be of very small value to the treasury. He asked for no office or dignity, civil or military, nor even for gold, but only for such a supply of rations to his troops as the Emperor himself should consider reasonable; and in return for these slight concessions he promised friendship and military assistance against any enemy who might arise to trouble the peace of Honorius and his Romans.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

409.

and makes  
wonder-  
fully  
moderate  
proposals  
for peace.

The moderation of Alaric excited general surprise, for in truth his demands were such as an Augustus might almost have conceded to an Arminius, or a Trajan to a Decebalus: but, for some reason hidden from us, Jovius and his creatures did not dare to advise their acceptance. The pretext alleged for refusal was that act of solemn imbecility, the oath by the head of the Emperor that no treaty of peace should be made with Alaric. 'A mere oath by the Almighty,' said Jovius, 'would have mattered comparatively little, as they might safely have trusted to the Divine good nature to overlook the apparent impiety. But an oath by the Emperor's person was a very different affair, and so awful an imprecation as that must never be disregarded<sup>3</sup>.' The flattered sovereign thought this

But the  
oath by the  
Emperor's  
head ruins  
all.

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Austria proper, Styria, and Carinthia.

<sup>3</sup> This discussion about the oath by the Emperor's head is illustrated by a law of Arcadius (395), enacting that any one who seeks to

BOOK I. reasoning most conclusive; and the Visigoth, pale with  
 CH. 17. rage at the tidings of the refusal of his request, set to  
 409. work without further forbearance to commence the  
*Second Siege of the City.*

The Second Siege of Rome commenced, The second siege of Rome by Alaric is one of the surprises of history. With the remembrance of the terrible famine and pestilence which accompanied the first siege vividly before us, with the knowledge of the repeated insults since then inflicted upon the Visigothic king, we expect to see some great and doleful tragedy enacted upon the Seven Hills. Far from it; the curtain is drawn up, and we behold, instead of a tragedy, a burlesque, the title whereof is 'The Ten Months' Emperor, or Attalus the Æsthetic.'

The citizens of Rome saw once more the Gothic army encamped around their walls, Ostia occupied, the large stores of provisions there collected taken possession of by the barbarians. They had no desire to see the experiments of last year as to the possible articles of human diet repeated; they began to ask themselves, very naturally, 'Since Honorius does nothing to protect us, and since he can neither make war nor peace with Alaric, but only shuts himself up behind the ditches of Ravenna, leaving us to bear all the burden of the war, why should we suffer any more in his quarrel?' They explained their feelings to the king of the Goths, and speedily an arrangement was made which seemed likely to satisfy all parties. The Imperial City formally renounced all allegiance to Hono-

evade a solemn compact which he has confirmed by invoking the Divine name, *or the name of the Emperor*, shall be noted as infamous, and suffer certain other penalties (Cod. Theod. II. 9. 8, or 3 in Haenel's edition),





PRISCUS ATTALUS



rius, and bestowed the purple and the diadem on Attalus<sup>1</sup>, the Prefect of the City, who as Augustus at once concluded the long-desired treaty of peace with Alaric.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.  
409.

The Praetorian Prefect of the City was already in official rank the highest person in Rome next to the Emperor. But independently of his high office, Priscus Attalus had in various ways made himself popular with various parties. He was a Greek, an Ionian—born, that is, on the Eastern shore of the Aegean, near the birthplaces of the old Greek poetry, philosophy and art. Looking at his medallions, one is at once struck by the Greek character of the face portrayed upon them. Though there is no strength in the brow, there is surely some artistic sensibility indicated by the lines of the mouth. The curve of the lower jaw and the well-rounded chin have somewhat of nobility, and when contrasted with the wooden imbecility of Honorius's effigy, he seems almost like 'Hyperion to a Satyr.'

From this art-loving Ionian Greek the Pagans in Rome expected nothing less than the restoration of their old temples and sacrifices. Yet he was not an obstinate Pagan, for he had been baptized by an Arian bishop. There again was hope for the still large though down-trodden Arian party. But yet again the Arian bishop who baptized him was himself a Goth, Sigisarius by name. That fact endeared him to the

His  
heathen,  
Arian, and  
Gothic con-  
nections.

<sup>1</sup> This Attalus is the same dignitary of whom mention was made as having been promoted, on the occasion of his embassy to Ravenna, to the office of Count of the Sacred Largesses. Since then he had gained yet another step. He appears to have joined the party of Jovius, and on the downfall of Olympius he was rewarded by the appointment of Prefect of the City.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

409.

Magni-  
loquent  
harangue  
of Attalus.

Goths; and thus it came to pass that he whose first promotion to high office had been earned through his personal acceptability to Honorius, was now set upon the throne by a combination of Honorius' sternest foes in order to achieve his downfall.

The new Augustus, having put on the diadem and the purple *paludamentum*, and having at once bestowed high military offices on his barbarian friends<sup>1</sup>, went with much pomp of attendant soldiery to a meeting of the senate in the Imperial palace. There he addressed them in a long and elaborate oration. 'Rome and the Senate had too long been treated with unseemly disrespect. He, Priscus Attalus, would restore both to their former high estate. He would make the name of the Conscript Fathers again venerable, he would bring the whole world back under the dominion of Rome. Yes, the *whole* world; the upstart rival on the Bosphorus should be dethroned, and Egypt and all the provinces of the East should again own the sway of the City by the Tiber.' Some such sonorous words as these he poured forth. Such of the senators as were versed in public affairs may have whispered to one another 'Graeculus esuriens in coelum jusseris, ibit<sup>2</sup>,' and the nobles of the Anician house, the wealthiest in Rome, openly displayed their doubt of the stability of the new Emperor's throne; but the tide of

<sup>1</sup> Alaric was made Magister Utriusque Militiae; Ataulfus, Comes Domesticorum. So Sozomen, ix. 8; but Zosimus, vi. 7, assigns one of the two chief military commands to Valens, the over-rash general, and the companion of Attalus on his stealthy journey from Ravenna to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> 'The hungry Greek to please his lord  
Will mount at once to heaven.'

popularity out of doors ran strongly in favour of Attalus, whose crown was the seal of the alliance with Alaric, the pledge of the punishment of the selfish court of Ravenna. The Visigoth had shown himself terrible as a foe, but if Rome could only keep him as her friend, what might she not accomplish by his aid against her enemies?

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.  
409.

The quick eye of Alaric perceived that the key of the hostile position was not in Italy, but in Africa. Rome was dependent on that province for the supply of corn for her citizens, but Africa was at present held strongly for Honorius by Heraclian, the executioner of Stilicho. Alaric, therefore, earnestly advised Attalus to send thither a moderate force of barbarians under the command of a certain Drumas, and to attempt nothing else till Africa was secured. But the new Emperor, whose head was quite turned by his sudden elevation, who had the echoes of his own sonorous address to the senate still ringing in his ears, and who was 'seeking to wizards and familiar spirits' for his policy, scornfully rejected the advice of his Gothic friend. He sent Constans (a different person, of course, from the son of the British rebel) with a slender body of troops into Africa; and he himself, probably in the beginning of 410, marched towards Ravenna to indulge in the luxury of trampling on the apparently fallen Honorius. That Emperor sent Jovius to him proposing a similar arrangement to that which had been made with the usurper Constantine. 'Let us divide the Empire; you reign at Rome, I at Ravenna, only let me still be Augustus here.' Jovius, the Talleyrand of this epoch, whose orbit of treachery it is impossible to calculate, seems to have become for the time a partisan

Africa the  
true key  
of the  
position.

410.

Insulting  
message of  
Attalus to  
Honorius.

BOOK I. of the new Emperor, from whom he accepted the office  
 CH. 17. of Praetorian Prefect<sup>1</sup>; and he it was who dictated the  
 410. insolent reply which he surely can never have had the  
 audacity to carry back in person. 'Not a particle of  
 Italian soil, O Honorius, not a vestige of the Imperial  
 dignity, not even thy own body will we allow thee to  
 preserve unmutilated. Thou shalt be maimed, thou  
 shalt be banished to some island, and then, as a favour,  
 we will concede to thee life.' Certainly the artistic  
 Greek nature of this man preserves a trace of the feline  
 cruelty which showed itself in certain passages of the  
 Peloponnesian war.

Flight of  
 Honorius  
 stopped by  
 the arrival  
 of rein-  
 forcements  
 from Con-  
 stantinople

However, for a time the very arrogance of the  
 usurper seemed destined to achieve success. Honorius,  
 thoroughly alarmed for the safety of his person, was  
 about to escape by sea to Constantinople, when sud-  
 denly six legions, amounting to 40,000 men<sup>2</sup>, landed  
 at the very port where he was making his preparations  
 for flight. They were soldiers of Theodosius II, sent  
 to the assistance of his uncle against Alaric.

which had  
 been two  
 years on  
 the way.

We receive a vivid impression of the disorganised  
 state of the Eastern as well as the Western half of the

<sup>1</sup> Presumably for Italy.

Zosimus,  
 vi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Zosimus's statement is quite clear: 'Six legions amounting to 40,000 men' (ἑξ τάγματα στρατιωτῶν . . . μυριάδων ἀριθμὸν ὄντα τεσσάρων). Mendelssohn does not allege any MS. authority for altering μυριάδων to χιλιάδων, nor is the Latin translator (in the Bonn edition) justified in rendering the passage thus 'in his erant hominum quattuor milia.' The authority of Sozomen who fixes the number at 4000 is not sufficient to warrant these arbitrary alterations of Zosimus' text. And the length of time that this body of troops had been mustering, and the decisive influence which they exerted in restoring the almost hopeless cause of Honorius, both point decisively to the *larger* number as the more probable.

Empire when we are informed that these men had actually been summoned by Stilicho, not later there-  
fore than the first half of the year 408, nearly two  
years before their appearance on the scene of action.  
Not unfriendliness, but inefficiency or procrastination—  
in this case a most seasonable procrastination—had  
postponed their arrival till now.

When these 40,000 men arrived, Honorius picked up courage enough to attempt a further defence of Ravenna, watching above all things for the issue of affairs in Africa, and postponing his departure for the East till he knew at least whether that province was lost to him.

It was not lost. Stilicho's murderer was still loyally serving his Imperial master. Constans, the general of Attalus, was slain, and the usurper, instead of even yet retrieving his fortunes by despatching thither an army of Goths, could think of nothing better than to send an apparently trifling reinforcement of Romans, 'with money' to reinvigorate his failing cause. Alaric began to be seriously displeased at the imbecility which his Emperor was displaying in reference to this African campaign. Jovius, too, seeing which way fortune was inclining, turned round once more and made his peace secretly with Honorius, but remained at the court of Attalus to sow dissension between him and Alaric, by suggesting to the Visigoth—a suggestion which probably contained some grains of truth—that the usurper, if he were once securely settled on his throne, would not be long in disembarassing himself, by assassination or some other means, of his too powerful barbarian benefactors. Alaric listened and half believed, but did not yet desert the cause of Attalus. He left Ravenna

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.

Dissensions  
between  
the puppet  
and his  
master.



BOOK I. unbesieged, traversed the province of the Aemilia,  
 CH. 17. compelling all the cities therein, except Bologna, to  
 410. acknowledge the new Emperor, and then proceeded  
 towards Genoa on the same errand.

Famine  
 again in  
 Rome.

Meantime, however, Alaric's own weapon, famine, was being fatally employed against his creature. Heraclian, like Gildo, by closing the African ports, was able to bring Rome to her knees. It was of no avail that Ostia was free, that the city was unblockaded, if the great granary itself was closed. Already, without

A tariff for  
 human  
 flesh de-  
 manded.

a siege, the horrors of the first siege were recommencing; the grain-dealers were accused of 'forestalling and regrating,' and when Attalus and his people met face to face in the great Flavian Amphitheatre—for, of course, the games must go on though all else was falling into ruin—it is said that an angry murmur surged round through the topmost seats where the populace sat, and that fierce voices shouted to the new Augustus, *Pretium inpone carni humanae*—'Fix a maximum price for human flesh.'

Attalus  
 deposed at  
 Rimini.

Again the senate assembled; again all the reasonable men in that assembly urged that Drumas and the barbarians should be sent to cut the knot of the African difficulty; again the vain-glorious Attalus refused to entrust the war to other than Roman hands. Then at length, on the receipt of these tidings, the patience of Alaric gave way. He marched back to Rimini, his nearest outpost towards Ravenna, commanded Attalus to wait upon him, and there, in the plain outside the town, in sight of the Gothic army and the Roman inhabitants, he stripped him of his diadem and purple robe, and proclaimed that he was degraded to the condition of a private citizen. The

unhappy Greek, so proudly self-inflated and so ignominiously collapsing, had reigned for something less than a year. He did not dare to return to Rome, far less, of course, to Ravenna, but requested permission for himself and his son Ampelius to follow the train of the Visigothic army. The permission was disdainfully granted, and we shall meet with him once again in the barbarian camp.

Alaric, in order to give Honorius visible tokens of the change in his policy, sent to the court of Ravenna the Imperial ensigns which he had stripped from his dethroned client. The officers also, who had received their commands from the usurper, restored their military belts to the legitimate Emperor, and humbly implored his forgiveness. 'And now, surely,' any discriminating observer might have thought, 'a just and honourable peace will be concluded between Alaric and Honorius, and Italy will rest from her anguish.'

The hindrance to the fulfilment of these hopes came this time from Sarus the Goth, a man who is to us scarcely more than a mere name, but about whom a real historian, writing contemporaneously, would probably have told us much. At present we know little, except that he was at first a friend and follower of Stilicho<sup>1</sup>, but turned against him (as has been already described) with the turn in the tide of fortune, and sought, but unsuccessfully, to earn the price set upon his head. Then had come his short-lived success and ignominious failure in the campaign against Constantine, notwithstanding which he was still deemed by the people the fittest man to make head against his

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.

Renewed  
overtures  
to Honorius.

Sarus  
prevents  
peace.

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 30.

BOOK I. countryman Alaric after Stilicho's death<sup>1</sup>. He was  
 CH. 17. not, however, chosen for that purpose by the Emperor,  
 410. but had since remained near Ravenna with a small  
 force of his countrymen, standing sullenly aloof from  
 both the combatants. He had some cause of rankling  
 enmity against Ataulfus, if not against Alaric also, and  
 some have conjectured that an old Teutonic blood-feud  
 existed between his house and theirs. Now there came  
 either a skirmish or an apprehension of one between  
 the old enemies<sup>2</sup>. In the end, Sarus, with 300 chosen  
 warriors, entered Ravenna and exerted all his influence  
 to break off the negotiations between Honorius and the  
 Visigoths.

He succeeded: Alaric retired from the conferences  
 and marched southwards, this time in deadly earnest,  
 intent upon *The Third Siege of Rome*.

Our ignor-  
 ance as to  
 the details  
 of the  
 Third  
 Siege of  
 Rome.

Of this, the crowning act of the great drama, the  
 real end of old Rome, the real beginning of the new  
 age, it must be confessed that we scarcely know  
 more than we do of the fall of Babylon. The history  
 of Zosimus comes to an abrupt end just short of the  
 climax. That the work is incomplete is manifest from  
 the preface, in which Zosimus contrasts it with that of  
 Polybius, and evidently implies that as the latter had  
 told the story of the rise of Rome, so he would describe  
 her fall. The capture of the city in 410 would have  
 been the fitting dramatic close to his narrative, and it

<sup>1</sup> Zosimus, v. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Zosimus says that Ataulfus lay in wait for Sarus, but did not  
 succeed in fighting him. Sozomen declares that Sarus attacked  
 Alaric, knowing that any treaty which he might make with the  
 Emperor would be prejudicial to *his* interests, and implies that the  
 attack was successful.

is quite impossible to suppose that he did not at least intend to write of it. The ecclesiastical historians have transmitted a few anecdotes illustrative of the religious aspect of the struggle; we are grateful for these details, which preserve us from utter darkness, but the very importance attached to them, the frequency of their repetition by subsequent chroniclers, show how little was really known of the more important incidents of the siege. Rome, which had described with such eager minuteness the death-pangs of a hundred cities which she had taken, has left untold the story of her own overthrow.

Alaric was spared, this time, the necessity of reducing the city by a slow blockade. On the night of the 24th<sup>1</sup> of August, it would seem almost immediately after his appearance before the walls, his troops burst in by the Salarian Gate<sup>2</sup>, near the eastern flank of the Pincian Hill, close to the gardens of Sallust, and about half a mile from the Baths of Diocletian<sup>3</sup>.

Hints indeed are let fall that the gates were opened to him by treachery, but they rest only on the very doubtful authority of Procopius, who wrote more than a century after the event. He describes circumstantially<sup>4</sup> a stratagem of Alaric's, who, he says, presented to the Roman nobles three hundred of the bravest youths of his nation under the guise of slaves, by

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.

Alaric  
breaks into  
the city,  
24th Aug.,  
410.

Doubtful  
stories of  
treachery  
within the  
city.

<sup>1</sup> Or 26th. These two dates rest on the authority of Theophanes and Cedrenus, both late authors.

<sup>2</sup> The Salarian Gate stood upon the Salarian Way, the road by which in old times the Romans used to carry sea-salt up to the country of the Sabines.

<sup>3</sup> The site of the modern railway station.

<sup>4</sup> De Bello Vandalico, i. 2.



BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.

whom, when the fitting time came, he was admitted through the Salarian Gate. Or else, says the same author, the venerable Christian matron Proba (mother of the Consuls Probinus and Olybrius), pitying the sufferings of the people from famine, ordered her slaves to open the gate by night and so end their misery. Neither story harmonises with the characters or mutual relation of the chief actors in the scene; and the words of the contemporary Orosius<sup>1</sup>, 'Alaric appears, he besieges the trembling city, he throws it into confusion, *he breaks into it*,' seem almost conclusive against the hypothesis of treachery. In confirmation of this view, that Rome was taken by assault, we find it stated very emphatically that the splendid palace of Sallust was set on fire—just what we might expect to have happened if there was hard fighting around the Salarian Gate.

Savage  
deeds of  
the Goths.

It was said in a preceding chapter that we must not think of the Visigoths as savages, scarcely even, except in the classical sense of the word, as barbarians. Now however that they have entered Rome, now that, after years of waiting and marching and diplomatising, the prize is at last theirs, the accumulated treasures of the world at their feet, and few days in which to pick them up, we may have to fall back for a time upon that more popular conception of their character. Every army during the sack and pillage of a conquered town sinks to the level of the savage; a fever of avarice, cruelty, lust, burns in the veins of men to whom, after months of hardship and discipline, all at once every-

<sup>1</sup> 'Adest Alaricus: trepidam Romam obsidet, turbat, irrumpit.' (Orosius, vii. 39.)



thing is permitted, nothing is forbidden. The latent demon in each man's heart suddenly asserts himself, looks into the eyes of demon brethren, and becomes ten times more terrible by the communion of evil. Thus, though the soldiers of Alaric were ministers of mercy when compared with those of Alva or Tilly, we cannot doubt that brutality and outrage of every kind marked their entrance into the conquered city.

One instance recorded is doubtless the type of thousands. On the Aventine hill dwelt, as has been already said<sup>1</sup>, the widow Marcella, with her friend and adopted daughter Principia. Of noble birth and conspicuous beauty, Marcella had lost her husband in her early youth after only seven months of married life. Refusing all offers of re-marriage she devoted herself thenceforward to a life of seclusion and charity, turned her palace on the Aventine into a convent, and bestowed the greater part of her substance on the poor. While the great advocate of monasticism, Jerome, had dwelt in Rome, Marcella had been one of his most earnest supporters; after he retired to his cave at Bethlehem she was one of the most highly favoured of his correspondents. This had been her manner of life for fifty years or more: she was now verging upon extreme old age when she saw the ruin of her country. The blood-stained Gothic soldiers, who rushed into her house expecting large spoils from so stately a palace, eagerly demanded that she should surrender the treasures which they were persuaded she had buried. She showed her mean and threadbare garments, and told them how it came to pass that she, a Roman matron, was destitute of wealth. The words 'voluntary poverty'

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.  
410.

Brutal ill-treatment of the aged Marcella.

<sup>1</sup> p. 525.

BOOK I. fell on unbelieving ears. They beat her with clubs,  
 CH. 17. they scourged her: she bore the strokes with unflinch-

410. ing courage, but fell at their feet and implored them not to separate her from Principia, dreading the effect of these horrors on the young maiden if called to bear them alone. At length their hard hearts softened towards her; they accepted her statement as to her poverty, and escorted her and Principia to the Basilica of St. Paul. Arrived there she broke forth into a song of thanksgiving, 'that God had at least kept her friend for her unharmed, that she had not been made poor by the ruin of the city, but that it had found her poor already, that she would not feel the hunger of the body even though the daily bread might fail, because she was filled with all the fulness of Christ.' But the shock of the cruelties she had endured was too great for her aged body, and after a few days she expired, 'the hands of her adopted daughter closing her eyes, and her kisses accompanying the last sigh<sup>1</sup>.'

Fugitives  
 to the  
 Christian  
 churches  
 unharmed.

Our other anecdotes of the capture of the city are of a less melancholy kind. The Christian apologists naturally dwell on every fact, which suggests the reflection how much worse might the state of Rome have been, had heathens been its captors. Before entering the city Alaric had given strict orders, which appear to have been obeyed, that all the Christian edifices should be left uninjured, and that the right of asylum in them, especially in the two great basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, should be rigorously respected. Great multitudes of Pagans, as well as of Christians, availed themselves of this provision, which was accom-

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, Epist. xvi: 'Ad Principiam virginem, Marcellae viduae epitaphium.'

panied by a general recommendation from Alaric to spare human life as much as possible while satiating themselves with spoil <sup>BOOK I.  
CH. 17.</sup> <sup>410.</sup> <sup>1.</sup>

One of the Goths, a man in high position and professing the Christian faith, burst into a house, which formed part, though he knew it not, of the possessions of the Church. Meeting an aged nun therein, he asked her, not uncourteously, whether she had any gold or silver. She replied that she had much of both, and would immediately produce it. She then set before him such a splendid array of gold and silver vessels as the barbarian had probably not seen before. Bewildered, he enquired as to the nature and use of them. She replied boldly, 'They are consecrated to the service of the Apostle Peter. I am not strong enough to defend them from you. Take them if you are not afraid to do so : you will have to answer for the deed.' The officer, struck by her boldness, and fearful of incurring the guilt of sacrilege, sent to ask orders from Alaric, who commanded that the sacred vessels, the woman who had so faithfully guarded them, and any Christians who might wish to accompany her, should be escorted by soldiers to the Basilica of St. Peter. A kind of triumphal procession was formed, the soldier and 'the virgin of Christ' at its head ; brawny Gothic arms carried the sacred vessels on high ; the Roman Christians sang hymns ; their barbarian brethren raised the melodious antiphone ; many Pagans, wondering and trembling, joined themselves to the crowd, and thus through the blood-stained, smoking streets that strange chorus moved on in safety to the shelter of the great Basilica <sup>2.</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Orosius, vii. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.  
The soldier  
and the  
matron.

Within the same inviolable enclosure a Roman matron, young and of surpassing loveliness, was conducted by another Gothic soldier. When he had sought to offer her outrage, she had preferred death to dishonour, and bared her neck to his sword. He struck, and the blood flowed copiously; he struck again, but he could not slay; then he relented, and leading her to the church gave her into the charge of the officers who were stationed there, and at the same time handing them six *aurei*<sup>1</sup>, desired them to conduct her safely to her husband<sup>2</sup>.

The city  
itself in all  
probability  
not greatly  
injured.

The amount of injury done by the Goths to the city itself it is not easy to determine. Writers, who were remote from the scene and declamatory in their style<sup>3</sup>, speak as if the whole city had been wrapped in flames, every building shattered, nothing left but ruins. It is easy to see from subsequent descriptions of the appearance of the city that this is a gross exaggeration, and it is *a priori* most improbable that the Goths, who only stayed a short time in Rome, and had much plundering to accomplish in that time, should have devoted so large a part of their energies to the destruction of mere buildings. On the other hand, it is clear that they did use fire in one case, when they burned the palace of Sallust, and probable enough that other edifices may have suffered in the same way, though it is singular that this one palace is the only building which any historian condescends to specify as having been de-

<sup>1</sup> This curious payment, which gives a somewhat ludicrous air to the close of the story, was perhaps due to the Teutonic idea of *weregild*.

<sup>2</sup> Sozomen, ix. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome, Procopius, Philostorgius.

stroyed by fire. Orosius, writing history as an advocate, and having to maintain the thesis that Rome had not suffered since her conversion to Christianity greater calamities than befell her in her Pagan times, is not, it must be admitted, an entirely trustworthy witness on this point. But he, a contemporary writer, distinctly says that 'the destruction wrought by fire at the hands of the Gothic conqueror was not to be compared with that caused by accident in the 700th year from the foundation of the city<sup>1</sup>.' This verdict seems a probable one, and may support a conjecture that Rome suffered less, externally, from the barbarians in 410, than Paris from the leaders of the Commune in 1871.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.  
— — —  
410.

Little as we know from eye-witnesses of the actual details of the siege, we are not left in ignorance of the effect which the news of its fatal result produced on the minds of the provincials. Especially are we able to note the impressions received by the two greatest writers of that age, St. Jerome and St. Augustine.

In his cell at Bethlehem, St. Jerome was laboriously constructing his commentary on Ezekiel, wrestling with the shadowy difficulties of the most enigmatical of Prophets, when suddenly 'a terrible rumour from the west was brought to him.' The story of all the three sieges seems to have reached him at once, the famine, the purchased peace with its vain humiliation, the capture and the sack. All filled his soul with one sorrow and consternation, a consternation so bewildering that, as he himself says, 'to quote a common proverb, I wellnigh forgot my own name.' Then came the troops of exiles, men and women of the noblest families

Effect of  
the tidings  
of the fall  
of Rome  
on St.  
Jerome.

<sup>1</sup> This was the fire after the funeral of Clodius, and is generally assigned to the year of the City 702, before Christ 52.



BOOK I. in Rome, once abounding in wealth, now beggars.  
 CH. 17.  
 410. At that sight 'I was long silent, knowing that it was the time for tears. Since for us to relieve them all was impossible we joined our lamentations with theirs, and in this state of mind I had no heart for explaining Ezekiel, but seemed likely to lose all the fruit of my labour.' He quotes Lucan,

'What is enough, if Rome be deemed too small<sup>1</sup>?'

and proposes to modify the question thus—

'What can be safe, if Rome in ruins fall<sup>2</sup>?'

Then he quotes Virgil (with slight alterations)

'Not though a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues  
 Were mine, or came my voice from iron lungs,  
 Could I rehearse each tortured captive's pain,  
 Or swiftly tell the names of all the slain<sup>3</sup>,'

Isaiah, 'In the night Moab is taken, in the night has her wall fallen<sup>4</sup>,'

Asaph, the Psalmist, 'O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled, they have laid Jerusalem on heaps<sup>5</sup>,'

And again his favourite Virgil—

'What witness could recount aright  
 The woes, the carnage of that night,

<sup>1</sup> 'Quid satis est si Roma parum est?'

<sup>2</sup> 'Quid saluum est si Roma perit?'

<sup>3</sup> 'Non, mihi si linguæ centum sint oraue centum,  
 Ferrea vox, omnes captorum dicere poenas  
 Omnia caesorum percurrere nomina possim.'

Virgil has in the second line 'scelerum comprehendere formas,' and in the third 'poenarum.' Aeneid vi. 625-7.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xv. 1. (The A. V. differs.)

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxix. 1.

Or make his tributary sighs  
 Keep measure with our agonies?  
 An ancient city topples down  
 From broad-based heights of old renown.  
 There in the streets confusedly strown  
 Lie age and helplessness o'erthrown,  
 Block up the entering of the doors  
 And cumber Heaven's own temple-floors<sup>1</sup>!

BOOK I.  
 CH. 17.

410.

In the midst of his distress and consternation, Jerome does not fail to improve the opportunity for enforcing his own ascetic views. The first quotation from Virgil occurs in his celebrated letter 'De Monogamia,' addressed to the young widow Ageruchia, to dissuade her from re-marriage, 'Not even your sighs are safe,' he says; 'it is dangerous to weep over your calamities. Tell me, dear daughter in Christ, will you marry in the midst of such events as these? What do you mean your husband to do—fight? or fly? In either case you know what sad results to expect. For the Fescennine song<sup>2</sup>, the terrible trumpet will crash upon your ears, and your bridesmaids may have to change their part and act as mourners for the dead.'

He improves the event to enforce his advice in favour of asceticism.

Again, in writing to Gaudentius as to the education

<sup>1</sup> Conington's translation of—

'Quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando  
 Explicet, aut possit lacrimis aequare labores?  
 Urbs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos;  
 Plurima perque vias sternuntur inertia passim  
 Corpora, perque domos . . .  
 . . . et plurima mortis imago.'

Aeneid ii. 361-5 and 369.

This fondness for quotation from Virgil is one of the many resemblances between Jerome and his great namesake, Girolamo Savonarola.

<sup>2</sup> The merry verses chanted when the bride was being led to the house of her husband.

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.

of his infant daughter Pacatula, he seems almost to rejoice that she is born into so dreary a world, because there is a greater chance of her being trained to abhor it. 'O shame,' he says, 'the frame of the world is falling into ruin, yet our sins fall not from us! That renowned city, the head of the Roman world, has been destroyed by one conflagration. There is no region where the exiles from Rome are not found; churches, once sacred, have fallen into heaps of ashes; and yet we are still set upon covetousness! . . . Into such times as these our little Pacatula has been born; these are the playthings by which her infancy is surrounded; she is learning tears before laughter, sorrow sooner than joy. Oh, let her think that the world has ever been like this; let her be ignorant of the past, avoid the present, yearn only for the future.'

But the climax of his ascetic enthusiasm is reached in his letter to Demetrias, daughter of the Olybrius whose Consulship, along with that of his brother Probinus, Claudian sang of, and granddaughter of Proba who was accused of opening the Salarian Gate to the Goths. In this letter he asserts that on Demetrias consecrating herself to a life of perpetual virginity 'Italy changed her garments of mourning, and the ruined walls of Rome almost resumed their former glory. This signal instance of Divine favour made the Romans feel as if the Gothic army, that off-scouring of all things, made up of slaves and deserters, were already cut to pieces. It made them rejoice more than their ancestors had done over the first victory which succeeded the terrible disaster of Cannae.' Was it genuine monkish enthusiasm, or flattery, or the slavery of a declamatory author to his own rhetoric, which

made Jerome write such extraordinary sentences as these<sup>1</sup>?

BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

On his great African contemporary Augustine, the tidings of the capture of Rome produced an effect as powerful as upon Jerome. As powerful, and in a certain sense more durable, since it stimulated him to the composition of his greatest work, the offspring of thirteen years of toil, his treatise on *The City of God*. In his 'Retractations' he thus describes the origin of the book:—

410.  
Effect of  
the same  
tidings on  
St. August-  
tine.

'Rome, meanwhile, by the invasion of the Goths, under their king Alaric, was overthrown with the crash of a mighty slaughter. This overthrow, the worshippers of many and false gods (whom we are accustomed to call Pagans) endeavoured to connect with the Christian religion, and accordingly they began to blaspheme the name of the true God with even more than their usual bitterness. Wherefore I, inflamed with zeal for the Lord's house, determined to write a treatise on *The City of God*, in order to refute the mistakes of some and the blasphemies of others. This work kept me employed during several years, being interrupted by many other engagements which had to be attended to immediately. But this great work *De Civitate Dei* is at length completed in twenty-two books.'

He then goes on to describe the plan of the treatise. The first five books refute the error of those who assert

The 'De  
Civitate  
Dei.'

<sup>1</sup> I owe this quotation and the reflections suggested by it to Milman (*History of Latin Christianity*, i. 105, *note* 1). The other passages quoted from Jerome are from Ep. xi. (*De Monogamia*) *Ad Ageruchiam*; Ep. xii. (*De Pacatulae infantulae educatione*) *Ad Gaudentium*; Ep. xvi. (*Marcellae viduae epitaphium*) *Ad Principiam Virginem*; Ep. lxxxii. *Marcellino et Anapsychiae*; and from the preface to the third book of his *Commentaries on Ezekiel*.

BOOK I. that the prosperity of mankind depends on Polytheism.  
 CH. 17.

The next five are directed against those who admit that misfortunes sometimes befall the worshippers of the gods, but who contend that they ought still to be adored for the sake of the happiness which they are capable of bestowing in a future state. So much for the negative part of the work. Then, for the positive part, in the remaining twelve books he seeks to establish the truth of the Christian religion. In the first four (11th to 14th) he traces the origin, in the second four (15th to 18th) the growth, and in the last four books (18th to 22nd) the destined consummation of the two eternally separate cities whereof one is the City of God, the other the City of the World.

Such is the general outline of the great Apology of victorious Christianity, but there is many a creek and inlet of curious disquisition, of antiquarian lore, of fantastic speculation concerning Man and concerning Nature, of which this sketch-map gives us no hint. Its value as a piece of Christian polemic is, if one may venture to say so, far inferior to its value as a repository of the thoughts and feelings of Pagan Rome. As a mere piece of argument it suffers, not only from its intolerable prolixity, but yet more from the very completeness of its victory. Through page after page Augustine wrangles on with the Romans upon such topics as their worship of the goddess Felicity<sup>1</sup>. Why did they worship both Felicity and Fortune? What was the difference between them? Why did they not worship Felicity in the earlier ages of the Republic, and yet introduce her worship afterwards? Were they

<sup>1</sup> Book iv. §§ 18-23.



not really happier before than after they began to worship Felicity? And so on. Arguments of this kind seem to a modern reader a most wearisome slaying of the slain: and yet the passage from Zosimus, quoted in this chapter, about the insult offered to the statue of Valour, shows that these deified abstractions really retained some hold on the reverence of the average Pagan intellect, and that Augustine was not fighting mere phantoms, though much of his sword-play seems to us superfluous.

Upon the whole, while recognising the justice of its claim to a place in the front ranks of Christian literature, it may be said that the book is less than its title, that the single thought 'The City of God abideth for ever though the greatest City of the World has fallen in ruin,' is the most sublime thing which the author has to put before us, and that many of the arguments by which he tries to buttress his great thesis add no strength and no beauty to the edifice. As a work of art the *De Civitate Dei* certainly suffers from its extreme diffuseness and from the evident anxiety of the author to deal with every difficulty which had come before him in the course of a world-wide correspondence with the faithful. Still it is a great book, worthy of the fateful age in which it appeared, worthy to close the chapter of the old polytheistic literature of Greece and Rome, and to open the chapter of the new mediaeval literature which was to be the common possession of Christian Europe. The thought of this grand unseen City of God which was slowly forming itself out of the wrecks of kingdoms and empires was one which tended to realise itself in the lives of Christian men, and which undoubtedly influenced the policy of

BOOK I. Emperors as well as Popes, of Charles and Otho as well  
CH. 17. as of Hildebrand and Innocent.

410.

As we might expect from his position in the argument, Augustine strongly insists on all the mitigating circumstances in the fall of Rome, the respect shown to the churches, the privilege of sanctuary, and so forth; while, on the other hand, his statement that in so great a carnage the bodies could not even be buried<sup>1</sup>, and the many pages devoted to the unhappy lot of the women who had been dishonoured by the barbarians<sup>2</sup>, clearly show that the usual horrors of a town taken by assault were not lacking in the case of Rome.

The same great thesis, 'Rome has not suffered these things on account of her desertion of Paganism,' guides and informs the whole history of Orosius, which has been so often quoted in these pages, and which is dedicated to Orosius' friend and master Augustine.

Movements of the Goths after the capture of Rome.

But it is time to return from the theological schools of Bethlehem and Hippo to Rome and her invaders. Three days only, or, at the most, six, did the Goths tarry in the famine-wasted and probably fever-stricken city. Then, with their heavy burden of spoils, and a long train of captives<sup>3</sup> to help in bearing them, they marched southwards through Campania. Rome fallen, no meaner city seems to have even attempted resistance. We hear incidentally of one captured town, Nola, which

<sup>1</sup> i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> i. 16-19.

<sup>3</sup> Among these captives, we are told, (on the somewhat doubtful authority of an inscription in the church of St. Agnes at Rome, recorded in Gruter, p. 1173. 3, but apparently copied by him from Paronius) was a certain deacon named Dionysius, who by his great skill in medicine, which he prescribed without fee or reward, won the hearts of his captors.

had resisted Hannibal when flushed with his great success at Cannae, but which apparently did not even delay the victorious march of Alaric. Here round the tomb of St. Felix (who suffered martyrdom probably in the persecution under Diocletian) Paulinus the bishop had erected a little suburb of convents. He had long ere this voluntarily exchanged great wealth for a life of poverty; and, to quote the words of his friend Augustine<sup>1</sup>, 'When he was taken prisoner by the barbarians he put up this prayer, as he afterwards informed me, "Lord, let me not be tortured to make me reveal my gold and silver, for where all my wealth is gone thou knowest."' The context of the passage seems to imply that the prayer was granted, and that the good bishop did not even lose the little fragment of property which still belonged to him<sup>2</sup>.

BOOK I.  
 CH. 17.  
 410.

From Campania Alaric and his Goths pressed on still southward into Bruttii, the modern Calabria. They collected some ships at Reggio — intending to invade Sicily, some historians say; to pass on thence into Africa, says Jordanes the Goth. There can be little doubt that he is right, that Africa was the present object of Alaric's attack. Not necessarily, however, the ultimate object. His military instinct showed him that there, in the great granary of Rome, must the question of dominion over the Eternal City be decided; that

<sup>1</sup> De Civitate Dei, i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Every year on the Feast Day of St. Felix (14th January) Paulinus wrote a 'Carmen Natalitium' in his honour. Seventeen of these poems are preserved, in whole or in part, but their vapid fluency throws very little light on the history of the times, and as the order of the poems is itself uncertain, all the vigorous attempts which have been made to fix by their means the order of historical events result in nothing but reasoning in a circle.

BOOK I. while Heraclian still held Africa for Honorius, the  
 CH. 17. phantom-Emperor at Ravenna could not be dethroned.  
 410. He was going, then, to Africa, but doubtless with the  
 intention of returning to Rome.

But whatever might be his intentions, they were frustrated. The wave of Teutonic invasion had reached its extreme limit at Reggio, and was henceforward to recede. With delight, doubtless, and gratitude for what seemed like an interference of Providence on their behalf, the citizens of Sicilian Messina saw a great storm arise, by which Alaric's fleet was dashed to pieces, and a considerable part of his army, already embarked thereon, destroyed<sup>1</sup>. The Visigothic king could not bring himself to acknowledge defeat, even by the elements. He lingered near Reggio, still perhaps dreaming of conquests beyond the seas. Suddenly, in the midst of his warlike schemes, Death surprised him. We are told nothing as to the nature of his malady, except that it was of short duration. It is probable that in his case, as in that of so many other Northern invaders of Italy, climate proved itself mightier than armies, and that Fever was the great avenger.

Death of  
Alaric.

His burial  
under the  
River  
Busento.

The well-known story of the burial of Alaric derives some additional interest from the remembrance of his birthplace. He was born, as the reader may recollect,

Apud Pho-  
tium iii.  
261 (ed.  
Migne).

<sup>1</sup> According to Olympiodorus, the Gothic invasion of Sicily was said to be in some mysterious manner barred by a sacred image, erected in old times and containing within one foot a flame of ever-burning fire, in the other a portion of never-failing water. Its destined function was to protect Sicily from ravages by the fire of Etna, and from assaults of barbarians across the seas, by both of which scourges the island was grievously tormented after the image was overthrown (a few years later than this time) by Aesculapius, steward of the Sicilian property of Constantius and Placidia.



on an island at the mouth of one of the greatest rivers of Europe. The flow of the broad but sluggish Danube, the sound of the wind in the pine-trees<sup>1</sup>, the distant thunder of the Euxine upon its shore,—these were the sounds most familiar to the ear of the young Visigoth. Now that he had swept with resistless force from the Black Sea to the Straits of Messina, a river must flow over his grave as it had encircled his cradle. Forth from the high pine-woods of the Calabrian mountain-range of Sila leaps the stream of the Busento, which, meeting the larger river Crati coming from the Apennines, encircles the town of Cosenza, where the great Visigoth met his death. To provide their leader with a tomb which no Italian hand should desecrate, the barbarians compelled a number of their captives to labour at diverting the Busento from its ordinary channel. In the dry bed of the river they dug the grave, in which, amid many of the chosen spoils of Rome, the body of Alaric was laid. The captives were then ordered to turn the river back into its ancient course, and their faithful guardianship of the grim secret was secured by the inviolable seal of death printed upon their lips. So, under the health-bringing<sup>2</sup> waters of the rapid Busento, sleeps Alareiks the Visigoth, equalled, as it seems to me, by only three men in succeeding times as a changer of the course of history. And these three are Mohammed, Columbus, Napoleon.

Of that other triad who marked for us the commencement of the year 395, two are gone—Stilicho and Alaric. Honorius, their ignoble contemporary, as is the manner

Effect of  
the tidings  
of the fall  
of Rome  
on Honorius.

<sup>1</sup> The island of Peuce, Alaric's birthplace, was named from the forests of pine (πέυκη) with which it was covered.

<sup>2</sup> Jordanes calls it 'unda salutifera' (cap. 30).



BOOK I.  
CH. 17.

410.

of human affairs, survives, and is to live on yet for thirteen years. Something has been said of the effect of the tidings of the fall of Rome upon Jerome and Augustine: it would be improper not to mention the impression which they are said to have produced on the mind of the Roman Emperor. A chamberlain, says Procopius<sup>1</sup>, rushed into the Imperial presence, announcing that Rome had perished. ““Rome perished!” said the Emperor. “It is not an hour since she was feeding out of my hand.” He understood the sad news as relating to a very fine fowl to which he had given the name of Rome. Then the eunuch explained to him that it was only the city of Rome which had been destroyed by Alaric. “But I thought, my friend,” said Honorius, evidently relieved, “that you meant that I had lost my *bird* Rome.”’

The anecdote can hardly be true, but even the invention of such a story shows the estimate which his subjects had formed of the fatuous folly of the prince who is styled upon his coins, Honorius, the Pious and the Fortunate, the Triumpher over the nations of the barbarians.

<sup>1</sup> De Bello Vandalico, i. 2.

NOTE J. STATISTICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONTEST BETWEEN  
ROME AND THE BARBARIANS.

OF really trustworthy statistics concerning the numbers and resources of the two powers whose struggle we have been contemplating, it must at once be confessed that we have none. We have only guesses by learned and ingenious men, from data so vague or so distant in point of time that error from a thousand different sources, which no learning or ingenuity can detect, may have flowed in and vitiated their conclusions.

NOTE J.

1. *Number of the Goths.*

On this point it is no wonder that precise information is not forthcoming. One would not expect the tumultuary inroads of an unlettered people to show an accurate muster-roll or a scientifically arranged commissariat. Our most valuable number is the 200,000 fighting men of the Visigothic nation who, according to Eunapius, were collected in the year 376 on the Wallachian shore of the Danube under the leadership of Frigidiger. Add to these the other Visigoths under Sueridus and Colias, and under Athanaric, who may have afterwards become amalgamated with them, deduct the losses by battle, plague, and famine, add again the natural increase of the population during the peaceful reign of Theodosius, deduct for those whom Alaric may have left behind him in Illyria, and the reader can then form his own conjecture as to the number of Gothic troops who encompassed Rome in the three great sieges.

By a singular coincidence we have the same number, 200,000, mentioned<sup>1</sup> as that of the soldiers of Radagaisus who were shut up by Stilicho in the hill-country near Florence. There are some very slight indications that Alaric made his second invasion of Italy less of a national migration than the first, and

<sup>1</sup> Orosius vii. 37.

NOTE J. that this was one cause of his greater success in 408 than in 402. Possibly he may have been warned by the calamity which befell the unwieldy host of Radagaisus in the interval between those two dates, and may therefore have led a better disciplined and more compact army into Italy, and left the long train of waggons, the women and the children, behind. If I were to venture on a guess at all it would be that Alaric's army in his second and successful invasion of Italy ranged between 50,000 and 100,000 men.

### 2. *Number of the Roman army.*

At the time when the Notitia was compiled (probably on the eve of the battle of Pollentia) there were thirty-seven *Numeri* and eight *Vexillationes* serving in Italy<sup>1</sup>. These thirty-seven *Numeri* consisted of fifteen Legions and twenty-two *Auxilia Palatina*. If the conjectural estimate on p. 629 be correct, this would give us

$$15 \times 6100 = 91,500$$

$$22 \times 500 = 11,000$$

$$8 \times 500 = 4,000$$

106,500 men of all arms

as the total force on paper. But I must refer to what I have before said (p. 634) as to the difficulty, amounting perhaps to impossibility, of satisfactorily co-ordinating the various statements as to the disposition of the troops made in the Notitia. In the demoralised, exhausted, bankrupt state of the Empire, one may imagine almost any deduction that one pleases from this total to bring it down to the effective force under the command of Stilicho; but on the other hand one must also increase it by an equally vague and conjectural estimate for the troops withdrawn from the defence of the provinces in order to take service among the defenders of Italy.

### 3. *Population of Italy.*

In a young and vigorous community, the number of the civil population from whom fresh recruits might be drawn to oppose an invader who remained three years in the land, might have been an important consideration. But Alaric probably knew that he might safely despise any accessions to the Imperial strength that might be drawn from the exhausted and spiritless

<sup>1</sup> Notitia Occidentis, cap. vii.

population of Italy. What the number of that population was we cannot determine with any approach to accuracy. The only datum for the calculation is the number of the *levée en masse* of citizens from sixteen to forty-six years of age, which, according to Polybius, was made throughout Italy south of a line drawn from Spezia to Rimini in the year 225 B.C. in expectation of a fresh Gaulish invasion. The number then raised amounted to about 700,000 foot-soldiers and 70,000 horse. On this basis Von Wietersheim calculates the population of that portion of Italy at 4,700,000, to which he adds from Lombardy, Piedmont, and Venetia, 4,700,000; for the Alpine districts, 300,000; giving a total of 9,700,000 for all Italy at its fullest extension; and, notwithstanding the fearful waste of life in the Social, Servile, and Civil Wars, he claims a sufficient increase of population to bring up the number to at least 11,000,000 in the time of Augustus.

From these numbers those adopted by Mr. Bunbury in his article 'Italia,' in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography, do not greatly differ, though he adopts a somewhat lower estimate. He fixes the population of Italy south of the Spezia-Rimini line at 4,000,000, exclusive of slaves, and remarks that the population of the same district at the present time considerably exceeds 9,000,000.

It will be evident that in deducing the number of the inhabitants of Italy at the Christian Era from the statistics of a period more than two centuries earlier, there is already great danger of error. For the four centuries between Augustus and Theodosius we have absolutely no guide in reference to this subject, only the strong and almost passionate utterances of Pliny as to the depopulating effect of the slave-system of agriculture. Such utterances, and the whole course of Imperial history, justify us in believing that if the population of Italy was 11,000,000 at the time of Augustus, it was considerably less than that number at the time of Theodosius. It is to be remarked, however, that the estates were not so large nor the withering effects of slave-culture so terribly visible in the Lombard plain as in the centre and south of Italy. Possibly one reason of the ill-success of Alaric's first invasion was that he never passed beyond the former and more populous district. If so, his rapid march at the opening of his second invasion, across

NOTE J. Umbria to Rome, may have been a stroke of sagacious boldness like Sherman's celebrated Georgian campaign at the close of the American Civil War, and may have succeeded for the same reason, because it led him through a country the heart of which was already eaten out by slavery.

#### 4. *Population of Rome.*

If the population of Italy might have been a source of strength to her defenders, that of Rome, under the critical conditions of its food-supply, was an obvious source of weakness. What then was the number of those multitudes who watched for the approach of the corn-ships to Ostia, and who thronged round Attalus shouting 'Inpone pretium carni humane'?

There are two chief data upon which all the enquirers into this subject found their reasonings:—

1. The *Monumentum Ancyranum*, the marble tablet upon which Augustus records his donations to the Roman people. The sentence to which they attach most importance runs thus, 'Consul xii, trecentis et viginti millibus Plebei urbanae sexagenos denarios viritim dedi' (In my 12th Consulship [B.C. 15] I gave to every man of the urban commonalty, being 320,000 in number, sixty denarii).

This seems as if it should give some secure foothold to the statistician, at any rate for the time close upon the Christian Era. If we know the number of the poor free citizens, to estimate that of the senators, and all above the 'plebs urbana,' should not be difficult. The great element of uncertainty, however, arises from the slaves. Most enquirers concur in assuming them at something like the same number as the free population. This is however only a guess, and one which our comparative ignorance of social life in Rome leaves us no means of accurately testing. There are other difficulties of detail connected with the inscription, questions how low down in point of age this distribution of cash extended, whether girls as well as boys were included in it, and why in the same inscription other numbers (250,000 and 200,000) are mentioned, apparently for the same class of recipients.

Thus it is not surprising that from the same somewhat vague premises the following very different conclusions are drawn by their respective authors:—



Bunsen fixes the population of Rome (B.C. 15) at	1,300,000.	NOTE J.
Marquardt	1,630,000.	
Zumpt	1,970,000.	
Hoeck	2,265,000.	

I take this comparison of their different results from Von Wietersheim (i. 243), who himself arrives, by a course of reasoning of his own, at results very similar to those of Bunsen, making the total population of the city 1,350,000.

2. The *Curiosum Urbis*, a description of the city of Rome assigned to the age of Constantine, gives the number of the dwellings therein as 1790 Domus, and 46,602 Insulae<sup>1</sup>. Scholars are generally agreed that the former are the great self-contained mansions of the rich, and the latter the blocks of what we should call 'tenemented property' let out in flats and rooms to the poorer classes.

From this number of dwellings Gibbon infers a population of 1,200,000, and Von Wietersheim 1,470,000 at the beginning of the fourth century.

It is obvious, however, how exceedingly liable to error are all calculations of the population of a city from a conjectural allowance of so many inhabitants to each house. While the city was in the height of its prosperity, and 'overcrowding' was being practised, such calculations might be below the mark, and they would be almost sure to be greatly above it when the wave of prosperity was receding. The stately *domus* would still remain though the retinue of slaves was gone, and one or two solitary lodgers might represent the once teeming population of a crowded *insula*. It is, I suppose, considerations of this kind which have led Gregorovius to put the population of Rome at the time of Alaric's invasion as low as 300,000. To me, notwithstanding the undoubted influence of the removal of the Courts of Constantinople and Ravenna, so great a decline of population from the 1,500,000 which he admits for the time of Rome's greatest prosperity, seems too much, especially as the report of the Prefect of Albinus (to be mentioned in the next chapter), as to the rapid recovery of population by the city after

<sup>1</sup> These are the numbers of the summation at the end of the *Curiosum Urbis* and the *Notitia Regionum Urbis* xiv, as edited by Jordan (*Topographie der Stadt Rom*. ii. 572).

NOTE J. Alaric's sieges, shows that Rome still exercised a strong attraction of gravitation upon the people of Italy. I should be disposed to conjecture that the inhabitants of the city at the commencement of the first siege might still amount to 1,000,000. But the reader will see how much is left to mere guess-work in all these calculations. The Romans of the Empire had accurate census-tables and registers, but unfortunately the labours of the amanuensis, which have preserved to us their school-books and their religious tracts in almost too great abundance, have scarcely saved for us one of these.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE LOVERS OF PLACIDIA.

#### Authorities.

##### *Sources :—*

We still derive a little light from OROSIUS, whose polemical history ends with the restoration of Placidia in 417.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

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But our chief authority is OLYMPIODORUS, a contemporary, but known to us only at second hand by the abstract of his work contained in the 'Library' of PHOTIUS ('Olympiodorus apud Photium' is the usual form of quotation).

PHOTIUS is the celebrated litterateur-bishop, whose elevation to the see of Constantinople in the middle of the ninth century, followed by the appeal of his deposed rival Ignatius to Pope Nicolas I, was one of the chief causes of the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches. The history of his stormy life may be read in Milman's *Latin Christianity* (Book v, chap. 4), or in Finlay's *Byzantine Empire* (Book i, chap. 3). With all his many faults he was an earnest scholar, and, whatever injury he may have inflicted on the Church, his services to literature are unquestionable. Sent on an embassy to the Court of Bagdad, he employed his leisure hours in writing for his absent brother Tarasius, an abstract of all the books, 279 in number, which he had been reading since they parted. As many of these books have utterly perished, the value of this abstract, called the *Myriobiblon* or *Bibliotheca*, is obviously very great. Among other subjects, the religious controversies of the fourth century and the barbarian invasions of the fifth seem to have engaged the learned patriarch's special attention; and hence it is that we have not only a valuable abstract of the Arian historian Philostorgius (quoted in previous chapters), but also one of OLYMPIODORUS.

This author was a native of the Egyptian Thebes. He was

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

by profession a poet, and by religion a Greek, that is, a worshipper of the old Olympian gods. It is singular that Egypt should have given us *two* such valuable guides to the history of the West as Claudian and Olympiodorus. He composed his history probably under the reign of Valentinian III: what is certain is, that beginning with the year 407 it closed with the accession of that prince in 425. It consisted of twenty-two books, which are represented in the Abstract of Photius by not quite so many pages. Photius says that 'the style of the book is poor, and that there is a tendency to vulgarity in it, so that it can hardly be called a regular history, and that he seems to have felt this himself, for he calls it only "Materials for History," though on the other hand he adopts the conventional division into books, and endeavours to adorn it with a dedication to Theodosius.'

It may be permitted to us to conjecture that, as was natural enough for an Egypto-Greek historian, he took Herodotus for his model. Certainly his long digressions about the Egyptian oases, his complaints about the hardships of his voyages, his valuable though ludicrous account of the schools of philosophy at Athens, and his anecdotes about a favourite parrot which danced and sang and called people by their names, remind one more of the garrulous old man of Thurii than of any intervening historian. But be it dignified or undignified, would that we had still the twenty-two books of his history.

My quotations of Olympiodorus are generally made from the fourth volume of Müller's '*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*.'

It has seemed necessary to relate with almost tedious minuteness the marches and counter-marches, the intrigues, the negotiations, and the plunderings, which preceded or accompanied the Gothic sack of Rome.

Other sieges and pillages of the Eternal City lie before us, but we shall not find it necessary to bestow on all the same close attention which has been claimed for the first. Now that the secret of Rome's weakness is disclosed, many a nomadic horde wandering over the Scythian steppes has heard the strange exciting history,

and will not rest till it, too, has stood victorious on the Capitolian Hill. But we hear and we tell the adventures of Columbus, and of his fellow mariners, who could say

‘We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea,’

with an interest which we do not accord to the journal of a modern passenger traversing the same waters with all the appliances and all the luxuries of our modern civilisation; and uninteresting as the latter class of travellers do some of the more recent ravagers of Rome appear, on their commonplace and easily accomplished errand of destruction.

Not yet however for another generation is the example of Alaric to be followed. Forty-two years of something like repose for Italy have first to elapse. In journeying over this long piece of level ground we shall find our attention chiefly attracted by the story of the sister of Honorius and the sister-in-law of Alaric, the Queen of the Goths and the Augusta of the Romans, the lady Galla Placidia. 410-452.

The second marriage of Theodosius, as the reader has already been told, was a somewhat romantic affair, springing out of the murder of Valentinian II and the flight of his mother and sisters to Constantinople. The issue of that marriage, his daughter Galla Placidia, was thus the representative of two Imperial houses, the granddaughter of the warrior Valentinian, the daughter of the warrior Theodosius. She was born probably about the year 390<sup>1</sup>, and can have remembered little

Birth and  
parentage  
of Galla  
Placidia.

<sup>1</sup> I see that the statement on p. 569 (l. 10) may be understood as meaning that Placidia was born in 394 at the time of her mother's death. That is not my meaning, but I venture to think that Sievers



BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

either of father or mother, the Empress Galla having died before she was four years old, and Theodosius having departed immediately after for his last campaign in the West. As she inherited one of her names from her mother, so she seems to have been the only member of the family who inherited anything of the vigour and capacity of her father, character, as is so often the case, not being transmitted according to sex.

Her residence at Rome during the Gothic invasion.

For some reason unknown to us<sup>1</sup>, she did not follow her brother's court to the safe shelter of Ravenna, but remained in Rome at the time of the Gothic invasion. It is with sorrow that we find her at the time of the first siege assenting to the judicial murder of Serena, as decreed by the Senate<sup>2</sup>. We can well believe that the

(Studien, p. 447) is wrong in saying that the child born in 394 died at the same time as its mother. (See Zosimus iv. 57.)

<sup>1</sup> One reason, perhaps, might be that her kinswoman Laeta, widow of Gratian, was still residing in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Zosimus v. 38. Thierry (Trois Ministres des fils de Théodose, p. 376) attributes the initiative to Placidia. 'Elle comparut devant le Senat: elle accusa Serene de trahison,' &c. This is not a fair inference from the brief words of Zosimus: ἐδόκει κοινῇ τε γερονσίᾳ πάσῃ καὶ Πλακιδίᾳ τῇ ὁμοπατρίᾳ τοῦ Βασιλέως ἀδελφῇ ταύτην ἀναιρεθῆναι ('The Senate, and Placidia the half-sister of the Emperor, jointly determined that she should be put to death'). The whole story of Eucherius' suit and Placidia's rejection of it, as told by Thierry (p. 326), seems, as I have before remarked, much too large a fabric for the few lines of Claudian (In Cons. Stilichonis, ii. 350-361) upon which it is based. The following is the passage:

'Parte aliâ spumis fucantem serica frena  
Sanguineis, primae signatus flore juventae,  
*Eucherius* flectebat equum; jaculisque vel arcu  
Aurea purpureos tollentes cornua cervos,  
Aureus ipse, ferit. Venus hîc, invecta columbis,  
Tertia regali jungit connubia nexu;  
Pennatique nurum circumstipantur honores  
Progenitam Augustis, Augustorumque sororem.

wife of Stilicho had been a hard duenna towards her young kinswoman : and a few words of Claudian suggest the possibility that the suit of her son Eucherius for the hand of his cousin may have been too importunately pressed : still, the sanction which this young maiden of eighteen is said to have given to the death of one so unfortunate and so unjustly slain as Serena must remain as a stain upon her memory.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.  
—  
408-410.

After one of the three sieges of Rome, probably the second, Placidia was taken captive by the barbarians ; and though treated with all the courtesy and deference due to a lady of royal birth, was nevertheless distinctly spoken of as a hostage, obliged apparently to move as the army moved, and used as a lever to bring the endless peace-negotiations with the Court at Ravenna to a satisfactory issue.

Placidia  
taken  
prisoner  
by the  
Gothic  
army.

But after the death of Alaric, and when his brother-in-law Ataulfus<sup>1</sup> had been raised upon the shield and proclaimed King of the Visigoths, a change gradually came over these negotiations, and the restitution of the lady Placidia was less and less willingly offered by the barbarians. There was a change in the mind of Ataulfus, who was beginning to wish to be the champion rather than the enemy of Rome. ‘When I was at Bethlehem,’ says his contemporary Orosius, ‘I heard a citizen of Narbonne, who had served with distinction under Theodosius, and who was besides a

Ataulfus  
becomes  
philo-  
Roman.

Eucherius trepido jam flammea sublevat ore  
Virginis : arridet laeto Thermantia fratri.  
Nam domus haec utroque petit diademata sexu ;  
Reginasque parit, reginarumque maritos.’

<sup>1</sup> The name Ata-ulfus is a word of four syllables, possibly derived from Atta-Wulfs, Father-Wolf, and so equivalent to Wolf-son. It survives in the modern Adolf.

BOOK I. wise and religious person, tell the most blessed Jerome  
 CH. 18. that he had been on terms of the greatest intimacy with Ataulfus at Narbonne, and that he had frequently heard him say that, in the first exuberance of his strength and spirits, he had made this his most earnest desire—to utterly obliterate the Roman name, and bring under the sway of the Goths all that had once belonged to them—in fact, to turn *Romania* into *Gothia*, and to make himself, Ataulfus, all that Caesar Augustus had once been. But when he had learnt, by long experience, that the Goths would obey no laws on account of the unrestrained barbarism of their character, yet that it was wrong to deprive the commonwealth of laws without which it would cease to be a commonwealth, he at least for his part had chosen to have the glory of *restoring* the Roman name to its old estate, and increasing its potency by Gothic vigour, and he wished to be looked upon by posterity as the great author of the Roman restoration, since he had failed in his attempt to be its transformer.’

Ataulfus  
and Pla-  
cidia in  
love with  
one an-  
other.

Such were the plans which, during the years immediately following 410, were passing through the brain of the Gothic chieftain, and at the same time his heart was cherishing day by day more loving thoughts about the fair wise face of his captive Placidia. She appears to have been ready to return his affection; and it is therefore with some surprise that we find a space of four years elapse before the marriage ceremony takes place.

But the  
marriage is  
delayed by  
the influ-  
ence of

This delay seems to be chiefly due to the fact that the Visigoth had a powerful rival in the person of the Emperor’s new general and adviser, Constantius<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The reader is requested to observe that the British usurper of the sovereignty of the Gauls is *Constantine*; this new minister of

before whose rising star the influence of Olympius and Jovius successively succumbed<sup>1</sup>. He too had set his heart on winning Placidia for his wife, and the effectual services which he rendered to her brother seemed to excuse the pertinacity of his suit. Therefore it was that whenever Goths and Romans met to negotiate a peace, the restitution of Placidia was the point most strongly insisted upon by the ministers of Honorius, most sedulously evaded by the envoys of Ataulfus.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

the new favourite at Ravenna, Constantius.

By a rare piece of good fortune we are favoured with some details as to the outward appearance of the two rivals, and can therefore imagine some of the contending emotions which agitated the heart of Placidia.

Characteristics of the two rivals.

Ataulfus, among his tall countrymen, was not distinguished for his stature, but his shapely figure and dignified countenance more than atoned for this deficiency<sup>2</sup>.

Constantius, on the other hand (an Illyrian by birth, who had served in many campaigns under the great Theodosius), is described<sup>3</sup> as having a downcast, sulky look. His broad head was set upon a large neck; his great full eyes were darted with a scowl to right and left of him, so that men said he looked thoroughly like

Honorius is *Constantius*. The habit of giving the names of the still popular Constantian dynasty greatly perplexes the annals of this period. We meet with two or three persons of the name of Constans, and one Julian, about this time, in addition to this Constantine and Constantius.

<sup>1</sup> Olympius first lost his ears, and then was beaten to death with clubs, by order of Constantius (Olympiodorus, Fr. 8, ed. Müller). The particulars of the fall of Jovius are not recorded.

<sup>2</sup> Jordanes, cap. xxxi.

<sup>3</sup> By Olympiodorus (fr. 23).



BOOK I. a tyrant<sup>1</sup>: and when he rode he rolled forward on the  
 CH. 18. neck of his horse. But this slouching, gloomy tyrant was agreeable enough in his cups. At suppers and banquets he showed himself a pleasant and polite person; nay, so great was his condescension that when the time came for the comic actors to enter and enliven the feast, he would often rise from the table and contend with them for the prize of buffoonery.

We must again interrupt for a time the course of the history of Italy in order to glance at the affairs of Gaul and Spain, in which Constantius played a prominent part. The year 409, which witnessed the elevation and the short-lived glory of Attalus, saw also another anti-Emperor proclaimed in Spain, threatening the throne of the usurper Constantine. There was disaffection and mutiny among the Spanish troops of Constantine, which was connected in some way (whether as cause or effect our authorities will not enable us to say) with the fact that the three barbarian nations, Vandals, Alans, and Suevi, who had once before ineffectually dashed themselves against the barriers of the Pyrenees, now succeeded in penetrating the mountain-passes, no longer defended by the old national militia, and were soon surging wildly over the fat and fruitful land which since the birth of Christ had scarcely seen a spear thrown in anger<sup>2</sup>. Three-quarters of Spain at least were lost

28th Sept.,  
409.

<sup>1</sup> Or *king*. *Tύραννος* is of course susceptible of either meaning.

<sup>2</sup> Idatius says 'Alani et Wandali et Suevi Hispanias ingressi aerâ CCCCXLVIII (=A.D. 410) alii quarto Kalendas (28 Sept.) alii tertio Idus Octobris (13 Oct.) memorant die, tertiâ feriâ Honorio VIII et Theodosio Arcadii filio III consulibus.' The consulships fix the year to 409 not 410. The interval between the two dates mentioned, 28 Sept. and 13 Oct., might well be occupied in the passage of so numerous a horde through the mountain defiles.



to the Empire, and in the remaining quarter usurper and counter-usurper were struggling for supremacy. For Gerontius, the British lieutenant of Constantine, being for some reason superseded in his command, refused to accept his dismissal, and proclaiming one of his dependants<sup>1</sup>, a life-guardsman named Maximus, Emperor, in his name waged bitter and on the whole successful war against Constans, the son of his former chief Constantine. In the year 410 he seems to have succeeded in driving Constans out of Spain, and to have followed him into Gaul, intent on overthrowing the new dynasty. Gerontius besieged and took Vienne, probably in the early part of 411, and having put the young Constans to death, turned southward to besiege the strong city of Arles, where Constantine, given over to gluttony and sloth, was dragging out his inglorious reign.

But not for Gerontius was reserved the glory of stripping the purple robe from the base-born usurper. At the same moment, apparently, that he was marching on Arles from the North, Constantius, eager to do some signal service to Honorius and to win by the sword the hand of Placidia, was approaching it from the East. Ere either army had formed the siege the bulk of the army of Gerontius had melted away from his standards and had joined themselves to the host of Constantius.

<sup>1</sup> All the other authorities except Olympiodorus say or imply that this was the relation between Gerontius and Maximus. Olympiodorus Fr. 16. seems to make them father and son, saying Γερόντιος . . . Μάξιμον τὸν ἐαυτοῦ παῖδα, εἰς τὴν τῶν δομestikῶν τάξιν τελοῦντα, Βασιλέα ἀναγορεύει. I think we must conclude either (which is very probable) that Photius, on whose notes we rely, misunderstood the meaning of his author, or that Olympiodorus used the word παῖς in the meaning of 'servant,' which like the Latin 'puer' it sometimes bears. The Latin translator in Müller's edition renders 'ejus filius [potius, ejus domesticus].'

Perhaps, in fighting Constantine, they had persuaded themselves that they were showing their loyalty to Honorius, and did not dare to oppose in arms the representative of the legitimate ruler of the Empire. Perhaps, as Spaniards, they shared that feeling of loyalty to the Theodosian house which had brought Didymus and Verenianus into the field. Whatever the cause, Gerontius, finding himself general of an ever-dwindling army, threw up the game, and stole away into Spain. But the soldiers among whom he came, despising him for what they deemed his cowardly flight, mutinied against him, and took counsel to slay him. They surrounded his house at nightfall, but he, with one faithful henchman, of Alan blood, and a few slaves, mounted to the top of the house and did such execution with their arrows that 300 of the besiegers fell. At length, the arrows were all exhausted; the slaves, under cover of the night, glided away from the house: and Gerontius might easily have done the like. But he would not leave his wife, who for some reason could not share his flight, and his Alan comrade would not leave him. So all three were still remaining on the house top when the day was dawning. The bloodthirsty mutineers gathered around and set fire to the house. Flight was impossible: the only thought of the defenders was how to escape ignominy and torture. At the earnest request of his friend, Gerontius cut off the head of the faithful Alan, then of his wife, a devout Christian, who with prayers and tears besought him thus to preserve her honour. Then he thrice struck himself with his sword, but failing each time to inflict a mortal wound, he drew forth the trustier dagger and stabbed himself to the heart.

Meanwhile, the siege of Arles, though of some length, had upon the whole gone favourably for the cause of legitimacy. After four months the siege seemed likely to be raised by the approach of Edobich, a Frank, in the usurper's service, who had been sent to collect auxiliaries among his barbarous countrymen on the lower Rhine. But by a clever stratagem, Edobich's army was surrounded and defeated: by the ingratitude of an old friend Edobich was slain, and Constantine was forced to recognise that the pleasant years of Empire were over. He took refuge in a church, and there received priest's orders. The people of Arles, on obtaining the assurance of the Imperial clemency both for themselves and their late lord, opened their gates to Constantius. As far as the citizens were concerned, the compact was honourably kept, but not so as to the late Augustus. He was sent, with his son Julian, to the court of Honorius, but messengers met them at the twentieth milestone from Ravenna, bearing the orders of the Emperor, in whose mind the insult offered to his own majesty and the cruel murder of his kinsmen, outweighed the obligations of good faith and the respect due to his general's plighted word. Constantine and Julian were put to death, and their heads were fixed up outside the gates of Carthage, where those of Maximus and Eugenius, the usurpers of a previous generation, had already for many years been exposed, a ghastly memorial of an anti-Emperor's perils <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

411.

18th Sept.,  
411.

<sup>1</sup> The words of Olympiodorus are clear, ἀποτίθενται ἄμφω αἱ κεφαλαὶ Fr. 19. Καρθαγένης ἔξωθεν. It is certainly rather difficult to understand why Carthage should be selected as the scene of this object lesson on the duties of subjects: but I agree with my critics that to propose to substitute Milan for Carthage, as I did in the first edition, is to take

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

The revolt  
of Hera-  
clian, go-  
vernors of  
Africa.

But the lesson which these ghastly trophies were meant to teach was not learned even in Carthage itself. Heraclian, the murderer of Stilicho, whom we have seen valiantly and loyally holding Africa for Honorius, at length (in the year 413) raised the standard of rebellion himself, detained the usual tribute of corn which should have gone from his province to Rome, and set sail for the coast of Italy with an armament which the terror-stricken citizens believed to be larger than any squadron that had been seen since the days of Xerxes, and to consist of 3700 ships. Something however—perhaps the remains of the old Roman loyalty—lingering near his conscience, made him, who had been so staunch in his defence, falter in his attack. The Count Marinus resisted him with some vigour, and he immediately lost heart and fled, with one ship, to Carthage, where he was at once arrested and put to death<sup>1</sup>. So was the death of Stilicho avenged. Constantius asked for the confiscated property of the rebel, and obtained it, the historian says, ‘at one asking’—so ductile was the soft nature of Honorius. It amounted to £4600 in gold, and about £92,000 worth of landed estate: much less than Constantius had reckoned on receiving, but sufficient to enable him to celebrate his consulship (in the year 414) with becoming splendour.

We return to Ataulfus and his Visigoths. Two

an unwarrantable liberty with the text. Mr. Bury's suggestion that Carthago Nova in Spain is meant would be quite satisfactory as far as Constantine and Julian are concerned, but one fails to see why it should have been chosen for the other usurpers. *Καρχηδών* seems to be the correct form of the Greek name of Carthago Nova as much as of Carthago Vetus.

<sup>1</sup> Readers of ‘Hypatia’ will remember the use which Kingsley has made of this abortive stroke for empire on the part of Heraclian.



years after the sack of Rome they quitted Italy, never again to come back through the Alpine passes. The reason of their departure is not made clear to us. It may be that Gaul, whither they at first directed their steps, seemed a fairer prize than the much-ravaged plains of Italy: it may be that the desire of conserving instead of destroying 'Romania' induced the Gothic chieftain to withdraw from a land, the security of which was essential to the recovery of the prestige of Rome: it may be that the departure of the barbarians from the near neighbourhood of Ravenna was meant to soothe the Roman Emperor into giving that consent to the marriage with Placidia which threats had been unable to extort.

BOOK I.  
Ch. 18.

The Visigoths march from Italy into Gaul.  
412.

But strangely enough, if this was the aim of Ataulfus, he next appears as supporting the cause of Jovinus, one of the many usurpers of the Empire, who, relying on the aid of the Tartar Alans and the Teutonic Burgundians, had lately raised the standard of revolt at Mentz. That pitiable shadow of an Emperor, Attalus, who still followed in his train, had counselled Ataulfus to make this inexplicable move. One important result followed from the visit to the camp of Jovinus. The hereditary enemy, or, as the Germans would say, the *Erb-feind*<sup>1</sup>, of Alaric and of his successor, he who was in heart the murderer of Stilicho, Sarus, was coming to the same headquarters of mutiny, disgusted with the ungrateful feebleness of Honorius, who had allowed his faithful servant, Belleridus by name, to be murdered at the Imperial Court without making any inquisition for his blood.

Ataulfus supports the usurper Jovinus.

Unawares, the revolter Sarus rushed into the deadly

<sup>1</sup> The Goths would probably call him *Arbi-fijands*.



BOOK I. embrace of his enemy. Ataulfus waylaid him with  
 CH. 18. 10,000 men, against whom the eighteen or twenty  
 412. followers of Sarus fought with useless intrepidity. At  
 Sarus length one of this immensely superior force, anxious to  
 taken and killed by Ataulfus. take the captive alive to his master, threw a piece of  
 coarse sacking over the head of Sarus, and so brought  
 him helpless, but still living, into the presence of  
 Ataulfus, by whose orders he was slain.

Except this event, little followed from the visit of  
 Ataulfus to the camp of Jovinus. The usurper deeply  
 offended his powerful friend by proclaiming, contrary  
 to that friend's advice, Sebastian, his brother, as his  
 partner in the Imperial dignity.

413. With the opening of the year 413, Ataulfus sent an  
 Jovinus and his son embassy to Ravenna offering to bring in the heads of  
 surrendered by Ataulfus to Honorius and put to death. all the usurpers if 'a just and honourable peace' were  
 concluded. The offer was accepted, oaths were exchanged,  
 and the ambassadors returned. First of all, Sebastian's  
 head was despatched as a present to Honorius; then  
 Jovinus, besieged and taken prisoner, was sent in  
 bonds to Ravenna, and there slain by the Praetorian  
 Prefect with his own hand. The heads of the two  
 brothers were then exposed outside the gate of Carthage,  
 where the two pairs of usurpers had already preceded  
 them.

The court-  
 ship of  
 Placidia  
 proceeds  
 slowly.

Great services were these which the Visigoth had  
 rendered to the Emperor: still, the cardinal point, the  
 restitution of Placidia, could not be agreed upon. Con-  
 stantius began to press more eagerly for her return.  
 Ataulfus, to evade this demand, raised his terms, for  
 concessions in land, in money, in corn, yet higher and  
 higher. In the midst of the peace negotiations, he even  
 made a sudden attack upon the town of Marseilles.

The general commanding there, Bonifacius, a man who afterwards played a great part in the service of Placidia, repulsed him with great loss, and he scarce escaped with life. Still, however, Ataulfus pushed on his preparations for the marriage; and at last, in the year 414, the year which witnessed the consulship of the other lover, Constantius, Honorius was induced, chiefly by the good offices of a certain general, Candidianus<sup>1</sup>, to give his consent to the match.

The time was the early part of the month of January; the place where the marriage was solemnised was the city of Narbonne, the capital of Gallia Narbonensis, the chief province of Gaul. The house of Ingenuus, one of the principal personages of the city, was given up for the ceremony. Here, in the inner apartment<sup>2</sup> which was adorned after the manner usual with wealthy Romans, sat Placidia in the seat of honour, arrayed in royal robes. To her entered Ataulfus, not wearing the furs and carrying the great battle-axe of the Goths, but dressed in the fine woollen tunic<sup>3</sup> which was the appropriate wedding garment of the Romans, and in all other respects costumed like a countryman of the bride. The religious ceremony may probably enough have been performed by Sigesarius the Arian bishop who baptized

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

413.

<sup>414.</sup>  
The wedding at Narbonne.

Olympiodorus ap. Photium, Fr. 24 (ed. Müller).

<sup>1</sup> Candidianus is mentioned again by Olympiodorus as assisting in the restoration of Placidia and her son in 425. He also presided at the Council of Ephesus (431), where his influence was exerted on the side of Nestorius. He was then 'Comes Domesticorum.' The 'Pons Candidiani' at Ravenna, mentioned by Jordanes (*De Rebus Geticis*, cap. xxix) as the limit of Alaric's advance in that quarter, was probably named after him.

<sup>2</sup> Or it may be in the 'atrium,' or long porch in front of the house. The Greek word *παστάς* seems susceptible of either interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> *χλαρίς*.

BOOK I. Attalus, and who seems to have acted as a kind of  
 CH. 18. chaplain to the Visigothic army.

414.

And so the complicated and unsatisfactory negotiations of the last four years were brought to a successful issue. Romans and barbarians were made for the time one people; the captor and captive were fond husband and devoted wife.

The gorgeousness of the wedding presents which the Visigoth gave to his bride was long remembered. Fifty beautiful youths dressed in silken robes (the material for which came not then from Lyons, but across trackless deserts from the far East of Asia) knelt before the bride, whose slaves they were henceforward to remain. Each held in his hands two chargers, one filled with gold, the other with precious, or more properly, priceless, stones. The gold and the jewels were the spoils of Rome, but Placidia must have been more or less than woman if at that moment the thought of the possession of so many lustrous gems did not in some measure efface the remembrance of the woes of 'the daughter of her people.'

Attalus  
acts as  
choir-  
master.

After the presentation of the wedding gifts came the singing of wedding songs, in which the aesthetic Attalus, ex-Praetorian Prefect, ex-Emperor of Rome, but ever true to his Greek instinct for Art, led the chorus.

Importance of the marriage as prefiguring the union of the Latin and Teutonic peoples.

The day ended with loud demonstrations of joy on the part of both the populations whose union was typified by this event. And, in truth, small as was the result which actually followed from this marriage, we can hardly attribute to it too great an importance as symbolical of that amalgamation between the Roman and the Germanic races which was yet to be, though

confused and bloody centuries were to elapse before it was finally achieved. Augustus or Tiberius would have as soon accepted a menial slave for a son-in-law as the German hero Arminius. In the four centuries which have elapsed since those days, 'Gothia' has risen much in the scale of civilisation, and 'Romania' has learned that her very existence may depend on the clemency of these barbarians. And so it comes to pass that the sister of the Roman Augustus and the *Thiudans* of the Teutonic people are joined with mutual love and reverence in the honourable estate of holy matrimony; the word Barbarian loses half its potency as an epithet of reproach, and Mediaeval History begins to show itself above the horizon.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.  
414.

The issue of this marriage was a son, named after his maternal grandfather Theodosius. It might well be thought that high fortunes were in store for this child, that he would one day mount the throne of the Caesars and restore to Rome, by the arms of his father's soldiers, all and more than all that she had lost by the might of one uncle and the weakness of another. But it was not so to be. Ataulfus, though more than ever, since this infant's birth, disposed to be friendly towards the Empire, found his overtures for peace persistently declined on account of the predominant influence of Constantius. Nay more: without actual battle he appears to have been, by a kind of blockade of the Gallic coast, forced over the Pyrenees, and obliged to enter Spain where Vandals, Alans, and Sueves, having penetrated before him, left little to be plundered and much toil to be undergone by the latest comers. Soon after the Visigothic host had entered Spain the infant Theodosius died. His parents made great lamentation

Birth of  
Placidia's  
eldest son,

415.

who dies  
an infant.



BOOK I. over him, and buried him in a silver coffer in a church  
CH. 18. outside their new capital, Barcelona.

415.  
Ataulfus  
murdered  
by his  
groom.

The death of the child was speedily followed by that of the father. Ataulfus had among his servants a Goth named Dobbius (or Dubius)<sup>1</sup>, whose former master, the chief of some petty tribe, he had conquered and slain. Dobbius was loyal to the memory of his earlier servitude, and watched for an opportunity of revenge. It came one morning when the king, according to his usual custom, was, like many a Teuton since, going the round of his stables and enjoying the sight of his horses feeding. Then, apparently, the treacherous groom came behind him and stabbed him in the back. Dying, for he was not killed on the spot, he was able to whisper his commands to his brother, 'If possible live in friendship with Rome, and restore Placidia to the Emperor.' And with those words surely a spasm of grief shook the frame of the dying warrior as he remembered all the years wasted on windy negotiations. Four years of these and only one of actual possession of his fair

<sup>1</sup> According to Jordanes, the assassin was a certain Wernulf, at whose small stature his master had frequently mocked. But Olympiodorus, whose account I have followed, is much more likely to be right than Jordanes. The modern historians, including even the careful Aschbach, make the assassin a former servant of Sarus. I venture to think that they are mistaken. Olympiodorus, who knows the history of Sarus well and has described his death, simply says Πάλαι γάρ ἦν ὁ τοῦτου δεσπότης μοίρας Γοθικῆς ῥῆξ ὑπὸ Ἀδαούλφου ἀνηρημένος, 'For the master of this man was, of old, king of a Gothic troop, and had been slain by Adaulphus.' Had it been Sarus, he would surely have mentioned the name. Tillemont evidently thinks so, for he describes the event thus: 'Il fut tué dans son écurie par un de ses domestiques nommé Dobbie, de sa propre nation et qu'il avoit pris depuis longtemps à son service. Mais c'estoit après avoir tué son maistre qui estoit Roy d'une partie des Goths: et il n'avoit jamais pu luy faire oublier ce premier maistre.' (v. 629.)

Fr. 26 (ed. Müller).



young bride. The thought lent a fresh bitterness to death as the soul of Ataulfus went forth whither Alaric had preceded him.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.  
415.

The successor of Ataulfus was Singeric <sup>1</sup>, the brother of Sarus. Seeing the brother of the Erbfeind thus reaping the advantage of Dobbius's crime, we shall probably not be far wrong in supposing that he was an accomplice before the fact. His acts are those of a man determined to pursue the blood-feud to the uttermost. He tore the sons of Ataulfus (children of an earlier marriage than that with Placidia) out of the very arms of Bishop Sigesarius and put them to death. Placidia he durst not slay, but he dared to insult her. Mingled with a crowd of other captives she was forced to walk before his horse out of the gates of Barcelona, and this insulting procession <sup>2</sup> was continued till it reached the twelfth milestone from the city. Strange reverse of fortune for the daughter, sister, and grand-daughter of Emperors, humbled thus before an insolent barbarian on the soil of her own ancestral Spain!

Singeric,  
successor  
of Ataulfus,  
insults  
Placidia.

But the reaction, if such there was in the Visigothic camp in favour of the family of Sarus, was but for a moment. After a reign of only seven days Singeric was slain, and the brave Walia, a worthy successor, though not, as far as we know, a relative of Alaric and Ataulfus, was raised upon the shield in his stead.

He is slain,  
and Walia  
succeeds  
him.

Almost the first act of King Walia was to restore

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise Segeric (Orosius) or Regeric (Jordanes).

<sup>2</sup> The word used by Olympiodorus for this procession, *προπομπή* is sometimes used of a *funeral* procession. Is it possible that Singeric, with a refinement of cruelty, inflicted this insult on Placidia while she was actually following the dead body of her husband to the grave?

BOOK I. Placidia to the Romans. His chamberlain Euplutius  
 CH. 18. was charged to escort her to the foot of the Pyrenees,  
 ——— 416. whither came Constantius with almost regal pomp to  
 Placidia receive her. A firm treaty of peace between the two  
 restored to Honorius nations was at length concluded, and in return for the  
 and a treaty concluded surrendered princess the Visigoths received 600,000  
 between the Empire measures (nearly 19,000 quarters) of corn. This was  
 and the Visigoths. possibly the amount of pay which had been stipulated  
 for and wrangled over in the previous negotiations  
 between Ataulfus and Honorius.

Miserable condition of Spain. And in truth the state of Spain, wasted and trodden  
 under foot by four barbarian tribes (Vandals, Alans,  
 Suevi, and Visigoths), as well as by the remaining  
 Roman soldiery, was such that any considerable quantity  
 of corn might well seem a good exchange for a princess.  
 The usual terrible stories of cannibalism are told of this  
 time. In one Spanish town, it is said, a woman who  
 had four children ate them all. As the first and the  
 second and the third disappeared, she pleaded the  
 necessity of affording some sustenance, however  
 dreadful, to the remainder, but when the fourth was  
 eaten this plea availed her no longer, and she was  
 stoned to death by her horrified townsmen. One  
 commercial transaction, long remembered and talked  
 of beside many a barbarian camp-fire, marked this time  
 of famine. Some Gothic soldiers bought from some  
 Vandals a *trula* of wheat for an *aureus*. As the Trula  
 was only the third part of a pint, and the Aureus was  
 worth about twelve shillings, the bargain did not  
 redound greatly to the profit of the Visigoths, who  
 received from the other nation the contemptuous  
 nickname of *Truli*. Many a time, as we can well  
 imagine, were the streets of Spanish towns made

red with Teuton blood, and the yellow locks of slain barbarians lay thick across the pathway, after the taunting shout *Truli, Truli*, and some unknown word of answering defiance had greeted the ears of the trembling provincials.

The thought that Rome would be the gainer by all these dissensions among her invaders is expressed by the barbarians themselves with a plainness which seems most improbable (were we not reading the words of a contemporary) in the following passage of Orosius :—

Expectation that the dissensions of the barbarians would rescue the Empire.

‘Vandals, Alans, and Suevi, all sent embassies to Honorius, at the same time as the Visigothic king Walia, and on the same errand. “Do thou live at peace with all of us,” said they, “and accept the hostages of all. We fight with one another, perish with one another, conquer for thee : thy commonwealth will reap immortal gain if both parties among us perish.”’

Orosius upon this remarks, ‘Who would believe these things, unless the fact itself persuaded him of it. But so it is, that up to this very time we hear from numerous messengers that wars are being daily waged among the barbarous nations in Spain, and that the bloodshed on both sides is enormous : especially that Walia, the king of the Goths, is earnest in keeping the peace which he has made with us. Wherefore I would for my part concede that the age of Christianity should be abused as much as ever you please, if you can show me anything from the foundation of the world till the present time that has ever been managed with similar success.’ And so, with a few complimentary words to St. Augustine, he ends his history ‘of the passions and punishments of men during 5617 years, namely, from

Conclusion of Orosius's history.

417.

BOOK I. the creation of the world till the present day.' Here  
 CH. 18. — we part company with the worthy ecclesiastic, not  
 entirely convinced that the then condition of the  
 Roman Empire was the most fortunate thing that  
 the world had ever seen, nor regretting that the  
 truth of the Christian Revelation rests upon some  
 other arguments besides those alleged in the Seven  
 Books of the Histories of Orosius.

We part  
 company  
 from the  
 Visigoths.

Here also our path diverges from that of the Visigothic nation. In order to trace the fortunes of Placidia, the type of the alliance between Rome and the barbarians, we have followed the Visigoths over the Alps and the Pyrenees. It is now time to return within the frontier of Italy. But having accompanied their waggons so long, we may in parting from them give a brief glance at their future history. The successors of Alaric will establish a powerful and well-ordered kingdom on both sides of the Pyrenees, the capital of which will be the city of Toulouse, its northern frontier the River Loire, and its southern the Mediterranean and Atlantic. They will take a leading part in repelling the invasion of the Huns. Towards the close of the fifth century the fairest of their possessions north of the Pyrenees will be wrested from them by the Franks under Clovis and his sons. In the sixth century they will consolidate their Spanish kingdom, they will renounce Arianism, and be numbered among the most steadfast supporters of the Catholic faith. The elective character of their monarchy, the predominance of the great nobles, and then of the great ecclesiastics, will continue during the seventh century special marks of their polity, in which the power wielded by the great Councils of Toledo will

Their subsequent  
 career.



also be a remarkable feature. But during all this time the Gothic conquerors, while daily losing that rough and martial vigour which gave them the ascendancy over the Roman provincials, will still treat them as a subject population, and will but slowly and grudgingly admit them to even theoretical equality with themselves. And thus, when in 711 the wave of Saracen fanaticism shall break against the throne of 'Roderic the last of the Goths,' the whole fabric of the state will fall like a house of cards, and one lost battle by the Guadalete will make the Moors masters of Spain for centuries. The new Christian state, which will emerge from the mountains of Asturias and slowly win back town by town and province by province for the Cross, will be one in which Goth and Roman and Spaniard will be all welded together into one homogeneous mass by the fires of adversity, though a few Gothic names may survive, and even 'the blue blood' of the future Spanish hidalgo will faintly keep alive the memory of those fair-skinned warriors of the Danube, who in the fifth century descended, conquering, among the sunburnt populations of the South.

We return from the history of the Visigoths to that of their late Queen, Galla Placidia. Constantius, who was waiting to receive her at the foot of the Pyrenees, had received from Honorius the assurance that by whatsoever means, peaceable or warlike, he might succeed in liberating Placidia, he should receive her hand in marriage.

Some little time may, for the sake of appearances, have been conceded to the widow so recently a wife. But soon the courtship of the successful general, backed by the Imperial mandate, commenced in good earnest.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

416.  
Placidia  
received by  
Constantius,

who again  
presses his  
suit



BOOK I. Placidia again and again rejected his overtures. The  
 CH. 18. sullen, broad-headed, loose-limbed soldier, whose large eyes shot forth tyrant-glances on all around, could not understand why the widow of the comely and courteous Ataulfus should prefer the remembrance of the dead, to union with the living, lover, and was full of wrath against her confidential servants, to whose hostility he attributed her coldness.

and at last  
 succeeds.

The wed-  
 ding.

Issue of the  
 marriage.

At length the fortress surrendered. The year 417 was distinguished by the eleventh consulship of Honorius and the second of Constantius. On the day when the new consuls entered office, the Emperor took his sister by the hand and delivered her over to his colleague as a bride. The wedding festival, celebrated probably at Ravenna, was of unusual magnificence. It may have been a point of honour with the Roman general to eclipse the splendour of the far-renowned marriage-feast at Narbonne in the house of Ingenuus. Two children were the issue of this marriage; first, a girl, named after her Imperial uncle, Honoria, and then (in the year 419), a boy, who, in remembrance of his great-grandfather, the sturdy soldier-emperor, received the name of Valentinian. For this son Placidia obtained from her brother the title *Nobilissimus*, a sort of recognition of his presumptive heirship to the Empire.

Attalus a  
 captive.

The same year, 417, which witnessed Placidia's second wedding-feast, witnessed also the final degradation of the unfortunate child of Genius, who so gracefully led the revels at her first—the ex-Emperor Attalus. It is said that this poor piece of jetsam and flotsam had once more mounted to the top of the waves, and had been again proclaimed Emperor in Gaul in the year 414.

If so, he was soon again deposed, and 'as bearing the empty simulacrum of empire,' was carried by the Goths into Spain. There he wandered, miserable and aimless, till he could endure his life no longer, and took ship to sail anywhither away from his barbarian protectors. He was captured at sea by the ships of Honorius, brought to Constantius, and by him sent to Rome to await the Emperor's pleasure <sup>1</sup>.

This capture of an old antagonist, and some successes obtained in Spain by King Walia, fighting as the Emperor's lieutenant, against the Vandals and other barbarous tribes, suggested and seemed to justify the idea of a triumph at Rome. It was not much for which to stand in the triumphal car, and to ascend the *Clivus Capitolinus*; but it was as much of a pretext as was likely to be found in the lifetime of Honorius.

The outward appearance of the city was doubtless much improved since the three sieges by Alaric. Shortly before this time, the Prefect, Albinus, had reported to the Emperor that the largesse of victuals to the people must be greatly increased, since the population was rapidly augmenting, and as many as 14,000 had passed in through the gates in one day <sup>2</sup>. The

Rome recovers her prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> This is Orosius's account. According to other authors the Visigoths themselves surrendered him along with Placidia.

<sup>2</sup> Μετὰ τὴν ὑπὸ Γότθων ἄλωσιν τῆς Ῥώμης Ἀλβίνος ὁ τῆς Ῥώμης ἑπαρχος, ἥδη Olymp. ap. ταύτης πάλιν ἀποκαθισταμένης, ἔγραψε μὴ ἐξαρχεῖν τὸ χορηγούμενον μέρος τῶ Phot., δῆμῳ εἰς πλῆθος ἥδη τῆς πόλεως ἐπιιδούσης· ἔγραψε γὰρ καὶ ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ Fr. 25 (ed. Müller). τετέχθαι ἀριθμὸν χιλιάδων δεκατεσσάρων. As it is utterly out of the question to suppose that there can have been 14,000 *births* in one day in Rome, scholars seem to be agreed in substituting *τεράχθαι* for *τετέχθαι*, and understanding it of the number of strangers who streamed into the city and were marshalled perhaps for the Prefect's inspection. But the passage is not clear, and should be quoted under some reserve.

BOOK I. largesse may explain part of the influx of population,  
 CH. 18. and the narrative may show not so much the recovery  
 417. of Rome as the more profound exhaustion of Italy. Still it seems probable that the city was not much changed in outward seeming from the days when real triumphs were exhibited within its walls, and that a crowd of curious and not discontented citizens 'climbed up' as of old 'to walls and battlements, to see' Honorius 'pass the streets of Rome.'

Punish-  
 ment of  
 Attalus.

All that we hear concerning the pageant is that the Emperor, having ascended the tribunal, ordered Attalus to come to the lowest step of it; and, after his old rival had humbled himself in the dust before him, he (reminding that rival doubtless of his own similar menaces when Alaric stood before Ravenna) ordered the thumb and forefinger of his right hand to be cut off, and then despatched him to one of the Lipari islands, where, as one of the annalists epigrammatically expresses it, he was 'left to life<sup>1</sup>.'

417-421.

Constantius  
 Augustus.

Four comparatively uneventful years followed the marriage of Constantius and Placidia. Then, with the reluctant assent of Honorius, his brother-in-law was associated with him on the Imperial throne, and his sister took the title of Augusta.

The Eastern Court  
 refuses to  
 recognise  
 him.

The tidings of this addition to the Imperial partnership were not welcomed at Constantinople, where the young Theodosius, or rather his sister Pulcheria, who administered the government in his name, refused to recognise the new Emperor or to receive his statues, which, according to the etiquette of the period, were sent for erection in Constantinople.

<sup>1</sup> 'Truncatâ manu vitæ relictus est.' Marcellinus, s. a. 412 (five years too early).

Great was the wrath which this refusal kindled at Ravenna, and the long-smouldering jealousy between the two courts seemed likely to break forth into a flame of discord. And yet in a short time no one perceived more clearly than Constantius himself his unfitness for the position of dignified nothingness to which he had been raised, and no one more heartily regretted that elevation. The jovial, active soldier could no longer come and go as he pleased, no longer vie with the comic actors in provoking the laughter of the banqueters: every step which he took in the purple buskins of royalty was prescribed by the tedious court ceremonial invented by Diocletian, and perfected by the eunuchs of an earlier Constantius. His health began to give way, and, like many men of high animal spirits, he fell an easy prey to nervous depression. One night, six months after he had begun to reign, a figure appeared to him in a dream, and uttered the words, apparently innocent, but, to his ear, full of evil omen: 'Six are finished: the seventh is begun.' He was shortly afterwards attacked by pleurisy, and justified the dream and the interpretation thereof by dying before the end of his seventh month of royalty. Rarely has the world had so frank a confession of the unjoyousness of a kingly life as it received from this clumsy, roystering, and yet not altogether odious husband of Placidia.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

421.  
Constantius finds the throne an uncomfortable seat.

He becomes low-spirited and dies.

Not long before his death a transaction was proposed, which reminds us of the Roman senate's dealings with the Etruscan soothsayers during Alaric's siege. A certain Libanius, a mighty magician, sprung from Asia, appeared in Ravenna, and promised, with the Emperor's leave, to perform great marvels against the barbarians,

Proposed art-magic of Libanius.



BOOK I. entirely by means of his art-magic, and without the  
 CH. 18. aid of any soldiers. Constantius gave his consent  
 421. to the meditated experiment, but Placidia, a fervent  
 Christian always, and not too fondly attached to her  
 second husband, sent him word that if he permitted  
 that faithless enchanter to live she would apply for a  
 divorce. Upon this Libanius was killed.

Strange  
 conduct of  
 Honorius.

After her second widowhood Placidia was for a time  
 the object of extravagant and foolish fondness on the  
 part of her brother, whose uncouth kisses, frequently  
 bestowed upon her in public, moved the laughter of the  
 people. Then his fatuous mind wavered round from  
 fondness to mistrust and from mistrust to aversion.  
 He was jealous of her nurse, her waiting-woman, her  
 grand chamberlain; the jealousy of the masters reflected  
 itself in the squabbles of the domestics: the Gothic  
 followers of Placidia, the veterans who had served  
 under the standard of Constantius, often came to  
 blows with the Imperial soldiers in the streets of  
 Ravenna, and wounds were inflicted, if no lives  
 were lost.

423.

Placidia  
 retires to  
 Constanti-  
 nople.

At length the quarrel became so embittered that  
 Placidia, finding herself the weaker of the combatants,  
 withdrew with her two children to the court of her  
 nephew Theodosius II at Constantinople.

Honorius  
 dies.

Soon after, on the 26th of August of the same year  
 (423), Honorius died of dropsy—his feeble mind and  
 body having no doubt been shaken by these domestic  
 storms—and his poultry and his people passed under  
 other masters. The child ‘more august than Jove,’  
 whose birth and whose destinies Claudian had depicted  
 in such glowing colours, died at the age of thirty-nine,  
 having been by his weakness the cause of greater



changes than are often accomplished by the strength of mighty heroes.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.

423.

Joannes  
proclaimed  
Emperor.

On the death of Honorius some obscure palace intrigue raised Joannes, the chief of the Notaries, to the vacant throne. The office of the *Primicerius Notariorum*, though useful to the state, was not one which put the holder of it in the foremost rank of the official hierarchy. He could only claim to be addressed as *Spectabilis*, not as *Illustris*, and his chief duty seems to have been the editing of that very *Notitia Imperii* which has been so often quoted in these pages.

It is not easy for us to understand why a comparatively obscure member of the Civil Service should have been permitted to array himself with the still coveted Imperial purple, until we ascertain that Castinus, who was then master of the soldiery, and who the following year shared the honours of the Consulship, supported the pretensions of Joannes to the diadem, intending doubtless to enjoy the substance of power himself while leaving its shadow and its dangers to his creature.

At the inauguration of Joannes an event occurred which showed the influence still exerted over the minds of the people by the omen of the *voice* (φῆμη). While the officers of the court were proclaiming the style and titles of '*Dominus Noster Joannes Pius Felix Augustus*,' a cry, by whom uttered none could tell, was suddenly heard. 'He falls, he falls, he does not stand.' The multitude, as if desiring to break the spell, shouted with one accord, 'He stands, he stands, he does not fall;' but the ill-omened words were none the less remembered.

It was not to be expected that the family of the

BOOK I. great Theodosius, having still the resources of the  
 CH. 18. Eastern Empire at their disposal, would tamely acquiesce in the assumption of the Western diadem by a clerk in the Government Offices. The only question was whether Theodosius II would interfere for his cousin or for himself. He chose the former and the more generous course, confirmed Placidia in her title of Augusta, and Valentinian in that of Nobilissimus (titles which on account of the quarrel with Constantius had not previously been recognised at Constantinople), and equipped an army to escort them to the palace at Ravenna. He himself accompanied them as far as Thessalonica, but was prevented by sickness from further prosecution of the journey. However, he caused his young kinsman to be arrayed in the Imperial robes, and conferred upon him the secondary title of Caesar.

423.  
 Theodosius  
 II deter-  
 mines to  
 restore  
 Placidia  
 and her  
 son.

424.

Expedition  
 of Arda-  
 burius and  
 Aspar.

Ardaburius, the general of horse and foot, and his son Aspar<sup>1</sup>, whose names betoken their barbarian origin, were entrusted with the chief conduct of the expedition. Candidianus also, he who, ten years before, had so zealously promoted the marriage of Ataulfus and Placidia, was now entrusted with a high command in her service.

Ardaburius, after some successes in Dalmatia, set sail for Aquileia. An unfavourable wind carried him to a different part of the coast: he was separated from his followers, and taken in chains to Ravenna. Feigning treachery to the cause of his Imperial mistress, he received from Joannes the gift of his life, and was

<sup>1</sup> This Aspar is the same who in 457 raised Leo I to the Eastern throne, and was afterwards assassinated by him. His son, as well as his father, was named Ardaburius.

kept in such slight durance that he was able to sow the seeds of real treachery among the generals and courtiers of the usurper.

BOOK I.  
CH. 18.  
424.

Aspar, however, was deeply distressed and terrified for his father's life, and Placidia feared that her cause was hopeless ; but the brilliant victories of Candidianus, who captured many towns in North Italy, revived their drooping spirits.

What follows is related by the contemporary ecclesiastical historian Socrates, and the compiler feels himself therefore in some sort bound to insert it for the reader to deal with as he thinks fit.

425.  
vii. 23.

'The capture of Ardaburius made the usurper more sanguine in his hope that Theodosius would be induced, by the urgency of the case, to proclaim him Emperor, in order to preserve the life of this officer. . . . But at this crisis the prayer of the pious Emperor again prevailed. For an angel of God, under the appearance of a shepherd, undertook the guidance of Aspar and his troops, and led them through the lake near Ravenna. Now, no one had ever been known to ford that lake before : but God then rendered that passable which had hitherto been impassable. Having therefore crossed the lake, as if going over dry ground, they found the gates of the city open, and seized the tyrant.'

An alleged miracle.

Philostorgius, who was a contemporary historian in a stricter sense than Socrates, being a middle-aged man when these events occurred, attributes the defeat of Joannes to the treachery of his followers, who had been tampered with by Ardaburius ; and he knows nothing of the angelic shepherd.

Joannes was thus deposed after a reign of about eighteen months. He was led a prisoner to Aquileia, and slain.

Joannes deposed and slain.

BOOK I. where Placidia and her son were abiding. In the  
 CH. 18. hippodrome of that city his right hand was cut off.  
 425. He was then sent in derisive triumph round the town  
 riding upon an ass, and, after many similar insults had  
 been heaped upon him by the soldiery, the Notary-  
 Emperor was put to death.

Sack of  
 Ravenna.

Placidia with the Caesar her son entered Ravenna, which was given up to sack by the soldiers of Aspar to punish the inhabitants for their sympathy with the usurpation of Joannes.

Valentinian III  
 Emperor.

Ardaburius was of course liberated. Helion, the master of the offices, and patrician, escorted the little Valentinian, now seven years old, to Rome, and there, amidst an immense concourse of citizens, arrayed him with the purple of empire, and saluted him as Augustus<sup>1</sup>.

Pious rejoicings at  
 Constantinople.  
 Socrates,  
 vii. 23.

The tidings of all these prosperous events reached Constantinople while Theodosius and his people were watching the sports of the hippodrome. 'That most devout Emperor' called upon the people to come with him to the Basilica, and offer thanks to God for the overthrow of the tyrant. They marched through the streets singing loud hymns of praise, and the whole city became, as it were, one congregation at the Basilica, nor ceased from their religious exercises till daylight faded.

<sup>1</sup> With the proclamation of Valentinian III we lose the guidance of Olympiodorus.

NOTE K. USURPERS IN THE WESTERN EMPIRE DURING THE  
REIGN OF HONORIUS.

Orosius remarks that the fall of all the five usurpers by whom NOTE K. Honorius was attacked was a manifest proof of Divine favour, and a reward for his zeal in persecuting the heretics who disturbed the unity of the African Church (vii. 42). It may be convenient to have a short summary of these obscure and complicated transactions. The five tyrants were:—

(1) *Constantine*, proclaimed Emperor in Britain in 407; conquered Gaul in that year, Spain in 408 (death of Didymus and Verenianus); defeated by Gerontius in 411; taken prisoner by Constantius at Arles, and slain in the neighbourhood of Ravenna in the same year.

(2) *Maximus*, proclaimed Emperor in Spain by his patron Gerontius (rebellng against Constantine) in 409. In the year 411 Gerontius took to flight on hearing of the approach of the victorious Constantius. His soldiers mutinied, and he committed suicide as related in the text. Maximus, hearing the news, escaped to the barbarian auxiliaries in Spain. In the year 417, when Orosius wrote, he was still wandering about in Spain a needy exile. He is said, but on the rather doubtful authority of Marcellinus, to have been brought to Ravenna and executed in the year 422.

(3) *Attalus*, proclaimed at Rome by Alaric in 409. Dethroned the same year; restored (possibly) in 414; surrendered to Honorius in 416; punished by the loss of a hand, but not slain.

(4) *Jovinus*, a general of troops on the Rhine, proclaimed at Mentz in 412 by Goar, a chief of the Alans, and Guntiar, a chief of the Burgundians. He associated his brother Sebastian with him. Ataulfus slew Sebastian and sent Jovinus a prisoner to Ravenna in 413.

(5) *Heracianus*, Count of Africa, proclaimed Emperor, invaded Italy, was defeated, fled to Carthage, and was put to death, all in the same year, 413.



## CHAPTER XIX.

PLACIDIA AUGUSTA.

### Authorities.

#### *Sources :—*

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

FOR twenty years or more after the death of Honorius we have to pass through what Von Wietersheim calls ‘eine fast quellenlose Zeit,’ a time almost destitute of historical sources.

The before-mentioned annalists, PROSPER, IDATIUS, and MARCELLINUS, supply us with a few scraps of information. The ecclesiastical historian SOZOMEN throws an occasional gleam of light over civil history. In this general failure of authorities we are also grateful for such information as may be vouchsafed by a compilation once or twice referred to already,

The HISTORIA MISCELLA. This curious *farrago* of history forms the first part of Muratori's great collection of the *Scriptores Rerum Italicarum*. The first ten books are substantially the work of Eutropius (the familiar Eutropius of our boyhood) and reach down to the accession of Jovian. The next six books which reach to the destruction of the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy (553) are the work of Paulus Diaconus, the historian of the Lombards, who died near the close of the eighth century. Paulus generally compiles his history from sources which are already accessible to us, especially from Prosper, Jordanes, Beda, and Orosius, but occasionally he gives us a fact drawn from some author whose works we have lost. His history was continued, with additions, down to the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) by a Lombard, otherwise unknown to us, who is called Landulfus Sagax, and who appears to have lived about the beginning of the eleventh century. It was this curiously agglomerated

work to which Pierre Pithou, a scholar of the sixteenth century, seems to have given the name of *Historia Miscella*. BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

For the early history of Ravenna, which forms one of the subjects of this chapter, our chief authority is AGNELLUS (*Liber Pontificalis*) in the second volume of Muratori's *Scriptores*. The date and character of this ecclesiastical biographer are sufficiently described in the text.

The chief points of interest in Ravenna, its churches and its mosaics, are admirably brought out by Professor Freeman in his article 'The Goths at Ravenna' (*Historical Essays*, third series).

The topography of Ravenna, owing to the changes in the course of the rivers effected both by nature and art, is an exceedingly difficult subject. Pallmann, who, in the second volume of his *Völker-wanderung*, exhibits eight maps of Ravenna from approved sources, all differing in important points, has felt the difficulty, but has not done much to solve it. Possibly some fresh light may be thrown upon the subject by the labours of Corrado Ricci, a young citizen of Ravenna (now Dr. Ricci and a Professor at Bologna), full of enthusiasm for the antiquities of his native town, who has written the best popular guide-book to the place '*Ravenna e i suoi Dintorni*' (1878).

WE have now followed the varying fortunes of Placidia's life till we behold her in the thirty-fifth year of her age, seated upon the throne of the Western Empire, which for the next twenty-five years she governs, first with absolute sway as regent for her son, and then with power not less real, though apparently veiled, as the chief adviser of an indolent and voluptuous young man. Placidia  
rules the  
Western  
Empire for  
a quarter  
of a cen-  
tury.

Ravenna continued to be the head-quarters of the Imperial authority. Would that it were possible to convey to the mind of the reader who has not seen Ravenna, a small part of the impressions which it produces on him who visits it in the spirit of a pilgrim of history, not caring about Nineteenth Century interests or pleasures, but solely intent on studying its Ravenna  
her capital.

BOOK I. weird antiquities and learning from them the spell  
 CH. 19. by which he can bridge over fourteen swiftly-flowing  
 centuries, and stand again in that Ravenna which  
 heard of the downfall of Rome and saw the marriage of  
 Placidia.

Present  
 aspect of  
 Ravenna.

Lying in a vast alluvial plain, with only the sharp  
 ridge of the mountains of San Marino to break its  
 monotonous horizon, Ravenna is now doubly stranded ;  
 for the sea which once lapped its walls, and brought  
 the commerce and the squadrons of the world under  
 its towers, has retreated to a distance of five miles,  
 and is only discernible from the top of its church  
 spires, while the railway has left it thirty miles or  
 more out of its main course, and only recognises its  
 existence by two feeble branches provided with in-  
 frequent trains. Yet, as the inhabitants point out to the  
 visitor, this silent and desolate-looking town is by no  
 means devoid of commercial activity. As an agricultural  
 centre it transacts a large trade in pollenta and flour ;  
 above all, it is famous for its eels, which swarm in the  
 mud of the canals that once sheltered Honorius, and  
 which are so highly esteemed throughout Italy that a  
 Neapolitan fisherman would rather sell the coat off his  
 back than dispense with his Ravenna eel on Christmas  
 Eve.

Fluviatile  
 deposits.

This mud, poured forth age after age by the sluggish  
 river which has gathered it out of the black loam of  
 Lombardy, has sealed up Ravenna, immuring her from  
 the busy world. The process still goes on visibly.  
 The last deposit made by the river is mere marsh (like  
 that through which the troops of Aspar found their  
 mysterious way) ; and this marsh can only be used  
 for the cultivation of rice. You see with pity bare-

legged peasants in March or April, toiling in this sticky slime, preparing the ground for the crop, and the thought occurs to you whether similar scenes were present to the mind of Dante when he condemned the irascible and the sullen to immersion in a muddy marsh :—

‘And I, who stood intent upon beholding,  
Saw people mud-besprent in that lagoon,  
All of them naked and with angry look.

Fixed in the mire, they say, “We sullen were  
In the sweet air which by the sun is gladdened,  
Bearing within ourselves the sluggish reek;  
Now we are sullen in this sable mire<sup>1</sup>.”’

Gradually, as the muddy deposit increases, the soil becomes firmer, and that which was only a rice swamp becomes solid soil suitable for the cultivation of maize.

When Honorius took refuge in Ravenna, it was probably defended by islands and lagoons, and approached by deep-sea channels, nearly in the same way as Venice now is. The islands protected the inner pools from the fury of the ocean, and allowed the deposit of the river to go forward quietly, while the lagoons, counterfeiting at high water the appearance of sea, made navigation difficult and almost impossible to those who were not accurately acquainted with the course of the deep-sea channels which wandered intricately amongst them.

Here Augustus, with his usual wise intuition, had fixed the great naval station for the Adriatic. The town of Ravenna was already three miles distant from the sea (no doubt owing to a previous alteration of the coast line), but he improved the then existing

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Ravenna  
in the  
Fourth  
Century  
resembled  
Venice.

Suburbs.

<sup>1</sup> Inferno, vii. 109-111, 121-124 (Longfellow's translation).

BOOK I. harbour, to which he gave the appropriate name of  
 CH. 19. Classis, and connected it with the old town by a cause-  
 Caesarea way, about which clustered another intermediate town  
 called Caesarea.

and Classis. Classis, then, in the days of the Roman emperors,  
 was a busy port and arsenal—Wapping and Chatham  
 combined—capable of affording anchorage to 250  
 vessels, resounding with all the noises of men ‘whose  
 cry is in their ships.’ Go to it now and you will find  
 one of the loneliest of all lonely moors, not a house,  
 scarcely a cottage in sight: only the glorious church  
 of San Apollinare in Classe, which, reared in the sixth  
 century during the reign of Justinian, still stands,  
 though the bases of its columns are green with damp,  
 rich in the unfaded beauty of its mosaics. Beside it  
 is one desolate farm-house occupied by the guardian  
 of the church.

The Pine  
 Forest.

Looking seaward, you cannot, even from thence,  
 see the blue rim of the Adriatic, only the dark masses  
 of the *Pineta*, the ‘immemorial pinewood’ of which  
 Dante, Dryden, and Byron have sung, and which is  
 the one feature of natural beauty in all the dull land-  
 scape of Ravenna<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For a charming and truthful picture of the *Pineta*, see Symonds’s  
 Sketches in Italy and Greece—Ravenna. The whole article is of  
 great excellence, and fills up many gaps in the necessarily incomplete  
 sketch given above. The English reader will scarcely need to be re-  
 minded of Byron’s lines on the *Pineta* (*Don Juan*, iii. 105–6)—

‘Sweet hour of twilight,—in the solitude  
 Of the pine-forest, and the silent shore  
 Which bounds Ravenna’s immemorial wood,  
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave flowed o’er,  
 To where the last Caesarean fortress stood.  
 Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio’s lore  
 And Dryden’s lay made haunted ground to me,  
 How have I loved the twilight hour and thee.



It may be said that this picture of Ravenna offers but little inducement to any traveller to turn out of his way to visit it. It is true: and as Plato wrote over the doors of his school, 'Let none enter in but the geometrician,' so may it be said of Ravenna, 'Let no man who has not the historic enthusiasm strong within him set his face towards that city of the dead.' But for such an one, notwithstanding all the monotony of her landscape and the dullness of her streets, she has treasures in store which will make the time of his sojourn by the Ronco noteworthy even among Italian days. He will see the tombs of Western emperors and Gothic kings; he will look upon the first efforts of Christian art after it emerged from the seclusion of the catacombs; he will walk through stately basilicas in which classical columns, taken from the temple of some Olympian god, support an edifice dedicated to the memory of a Christian Bishop; he will be able to trace some of the very earliest steps in that worship of the Virgin which, in the fifth and sixth centuries, was beginning to overspread Christendom: above all, he will gaze in wonder upon those marvellous mosaics which line the walls of the churches—pictures which were as old in the time of Giotto as Giotto's frescoes are now, yet which retain (thanks to

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,  
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,  
 Were the sole echoes save my steed's and mine  
 And vesper bells that rose the boughs along,' &c.

The general opinion is that the Pineta itself stands on soil recovered from the sea, and Byron's lines show that this was his view. But it seems more probable that the land on which it stands was one of the islands which stretched in front of the harbour, as Lido and Malamocco stretch in front of Venice.

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

the furnace through which the artist passed his materials) colours as bright and gilding as gorgeous as when they were first placed on those walls in the days of Placidia or Justinian.

Mosaics as  
contrasted  
with Fres-  
coes.

Mosaics: it may be well to pause for a moment upon this word, in order to remind the reader of the special characteristics of the pictures thus produced, and wherein they differ from that other great branch of wall-decoration, the Fresco. The Mosaic is as it were a painted window deprived of its transparency. Fragments of glass carefully pieced together are the artist's sole material. Richness of colour, and deep metallic lustre, are his chief pictorial resources. Beauty of form, strength of outline, wonders of foreshortening, do not seem naturally to belong to the Mosaic, whether from the necessary conditions of the art or from the character of the ages in which it was chiefly practised. Domes of dark blue studded with golden stars, golden glories round the heads of saints, garments of deep purple and crimson, and faces which, though not beautiful, often possess a certain divine and awful majesty<sup>1</sup>: these are found in the Mosaic, and most conspicuously in that great temple in which Venice sets herself to copy and to outdo the splendours of Byzantium—the Basilica of St. Mark. Owing to the fact that mosaic decoration was then re-introduced into Italy from the East, it has long been invested with a specially Byzantine character; but the existence of chapels and baptisteries at Ravenna, dating from the time of Honorius and Placidia, and richly ornamented with mosaic work,

<sup>1</sup> Notably the face of the Redeemer in the apse of the Basilica of San Miniato near Florence, and the grand figure in the Cathedral of Monreale near Palermo.

shows that it was originally common to both Western and Eastern empires. Always, whether the work be well or ill executed, dimly majestic or uncouth and ludicrous, we have the satisfaction of feeling that we are looking upon a picture which is substantially, both in colour and in form, such as it was when it left the hand of the artist, perhaps fourteen centuries ago<sup>1</sup>.

All these conditions are completely reversed in the art of Fresco-painting, as exhibited, for instance, by Giotto in the Arena Chapel at Padua, by Fra Angelico in San Marco at Florence, or by Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel at Rome. Here we have a material which necessitates rapid workmanship, and invites to free and flowing outline; we have beauty of form, fertility of thought, and facility of expression; we have a continual progress from the conventional to the natural; but here we have *not* now what the artist first painted, but only a faded, almost colourless picture, which, even where it has escaped the white-wash of the eighteenth century, is not, cannot be, anything but the ghost of that which the artist's contemporaries gazed upon.

Cardinal Wiseman has truly said that for him who wishes to study the remains of early Christian Art undisturbed by the admixture of the great works of Pagan architects, Ravenna is a better place than Rome. A negative recommendation certainly. Yet he who has visited Rome, and been at times almost bewildered by the converging interests of so many ages, nations, schools of art, and confessions of religion, will admit

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Cardinal  
Wiseman  
on  
Ravenna.

<sup>1</sup> 'Les Maîtres Mosaïstes' of George Sand gives an interesting imaginary sketch of the life of an artist in mosaics.

BOOK I. that to some moods of his mind the advice comes  
CH. 19. soothingly.

Ravenna has three points of contact with modern mediæval history. We may say the same thing from an opposite point of view. In Ravenna that varied wealth of mediæval and modern memories which enriches nearly every other Italian city is almost entirely absent, and the fifth and sixth centuries rule the mind of the beholder with almost undivided sway. Almost, but not quite; there are three noteworthy exceptions. Byron lived here for a year and a half, in 1820 and 1821<sup>1</sup>. Here, three centuries before, in 1512, the young Gaston de Foix, nephew of Louis XII of France, gained a bloody victory over the leagued powers of Spain, Venice, and the Pope; and then, pushing on too hastily in pursuit, fell, pierced by fourteen pike wounds, on the banks of the Ronco, a few miles from the walls. Here, too, remounting the stream of time to the thirteenth century, we meet with the austere figure of Dante, wandering through the congenial shade of the Pineta, yet sighing in vain for the hills of Fiesole and the swift Arno of his home. But when we have visited these three places of pilgrimage, the Casa Byron, the Column

<sup>1</sup> It is a striking and disappointing illustration of the 'subjective' quality of Byron's genius,—perhaps it would be more truthful to say, of his disagreeable egotism,—that in the volume and a half of his *Biography* devoted to his letters from Ravenna there is scarcely the faintest allusion to the great historic interests of the place. There are endless chafferings with his publisher about the price of his poems, plenty of details about his connexion with the Countess Guiccioli, but nothing about the mosaics in the churches, only a line or two for the Ostrogothic king, and nothing about *Placidia*. The verses in *Don Juan* quoted above, praising 'the solitude of the pine-forest,' are his best tribute to Ravenna: those on the *Colonna dei Francesi* and Dante's tomb might have been the work of a meaner bard.



of Gaston (or Colonna dei Francesi), and the Tomb of Dante, there is nothing left to distract our attention from these dying days of the Western Empire, of which even the names at the street corners, 'Rione Galla-Placidia,' 'Rione Teodorico<sup>1</sup>,' continually remind us.

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

All else  
is pre-  
mediaeval.

The aspect of Ravenna in the fifth century is represented in the following passage from a letter<sup>2</sup> of the Gaulish nobleman, Apollinaris Sidonius, who in 467 (seventeen years after the death of Placidia) visited this city on his road to Rome:—

Apollinaris  
Sidonius on  
Ravenna.

'It is hard to say whether the old city of Ravenna is separated from the new harbour or joined to it by the Via Caesaris which lies between them. Above the town the Po divides into two branches, of which one washes its walls, the other winds among its streets. The whole stream has been diverted from its main channel by large mounds thrown across it at the public expense, and being thus drawn off into the channels marked out for it, so divides its waters that they furnish protection to the walls which they encompass, and bring commerce into the city which they penetrate. By this route, which is most convenient for the purpose, all kinds of merchandise arrive, especially food. But against this is to be set the fact that the supply of drinking water is miserable. On the one side you have the salt waves of the sea dashing against the gates, on the other the canals filled with sewage and of the consistency of gruel, are being constantly churned up by the passage of the wherries; and the river itself, here gliding along with a very slow current, is made

<sup>1</sup> 'Galla-Placidia quarter,' 'Theodoric quarter.'

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolarum*, lib. i. 5.



BOOK I. muddy by the punt-poles of the bargemen, which are  
 CH. 19. continually being thrust into its clayey bed. The consequence was that we were thirsty in the midst of the waves, since no wholesome water was brought to us by the aqueducts, no cistern was free from sewage-pollution, no fresh fountain was flowing, no well was without its mud.' This scarcity of drinking-water was an old joke or grievance against the city of the Adriatic. Thus Martial, writing at the end of the first century, says<sup>1</sup>—

Martial's  
epigrams  
on the  
water-  
supply.

'I'd rather, at Ravenna, own a cistern than a vine,  
 Since I could sell my water there much better than my wine.'

And again, rather more elaborately<sup>2</sup>—

'That landlord at Ravenna is plainly but a cheat;  
 I paid for wine *and water*, and he has served it neat.'

Further  
description  
by Sidon-  
ius.

We have another picture of Ravenna, still less complimentary, from the pen of Sidonius in the Eighth Epistle of the First Book. It is easily seen, however, that he is speaking in a tone of raillery, and that his words are not to be taken too literally.

He is writing to his friend Candidianus: 'You congratulate me on my stay at Rome, and say that you are delighted that your friend should see so much of the sun, which you imagine I seldom catch a glimpse of in my own foggy Lyons. And you dare to say this to me, you, a native of that furnace, not town, which they call Cesena' (a city about fifteen miles south of Ravenna), 'and who showed what your own opinion was of the pleasantness of your birthplace by migrating thence to Ravenna. A pretty place Cesena must be if Ravenna is better; where your ears are pierced by

<sup>1</sup> Epigr. iii. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 57.

the mosquito of the Po, where a talkative mob of frogs is always croaking round you. Ravenna, a mere marsh, where all the conditions of ordinary life are reversed, where walls fall and waters stand, towers flow down and ships squat, invalids walk about and their doctors take to bed, baths freeze and houses burn, the living perish with thirst and the dead swim about on the surface of the water, thieves watch and magistrates sleep, clergymen lend on usury and Syrians sing Psalms<sup>1</sup>, merchants shoulder arms and soldiers haggle like hucksters, greybeards play at ball and striplings at dice, eunuchs study the art of war and the barbarian mercenaries study literature. Now reflect what sort of city contains your household gods, a city which may own territory, but cannot be said to own land' [because it was so frequently under water]. 'Consider this, and do not be in such a hurry to crow over us harmless Transalpines, who are quite content with our own sky, and should not think it any great glory to show that other places had worse. Farewell.'

Having quoted this long tirade from Sidonius, it ought in fairness to be added that Strabo<sup>2</sup> (who lived, it is true, more than four centuries before him) praises the healthiness of Ravenna, and says that gladiators were sent to train there on account of its invigorating climate. When he attributes this healthiness to the ebb and flow of the tide (practically non-existent on the Western shore of Italy) and compares Ravenna in this respect with Alexandria, when all the swampy

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Strabo's  
panegyric  
on  
Ravenna.

<sup>1</sup> There may be some allusion here to an ecclesiastical tradition that all the bishops of Ravenna for the first four centuries were of Syrian extraction.

<sup>2</sup> P. 301 (Oxford edition, 1807).

BOOK I. ground about it has been turned into lakes by the  
 CH. 19. rising Nile of summer, we can at least understand his  
 argument. But when he says that 'much mud is  
 washed *into* the town by the combined action of the  
 rivers and the tides, and thereby the malaria is cured,'  
 we can only conclude that then, as now, the causes of  
 heath and disease in Italy must have been inscrutable  
 by the Transalpine mind.

Ecclesiastical atmosphere of Ravenna in the Fifth Century.

We cannot properly understand the conditions of the life led by the Augusta and her counsellors at Ravenna without imbuing our minds with some of the ecclesiastical ideas already associated with the place. It seems probable that there was here none of that still surviving conflict between the old faith and the new, which disturbed the religious atmosphere of Rome during the early part of the fifth century. Ravenna, like Constantinople, owed all its glory as a capital to Christian emperors, and contentedly accepted the Christian faith from the hands that so honoured it. As an important Christian city, it claimed to have its special connecting link with the history of the Apostles. The mythical founder-bishop of the Church of Ravenna was Saint Apollinaris, a citizen of Antioch, well versed in Greek and Latin literature, who, we are told, followed Peter to Rome, was ordained there by that Apostle, and eventually was commissioned by him to preach the Gospel at Ravenna. Before his departure, however, he had once passed a night in St. Peter's company at the monastery known by the name of the Elm ('ad Ulmum'). They had slept upon the bare rock, and the indentations made by their heads, their backs, and their legs were still shown in the ninth century<sup>1</sup>.

St. Apollinaris founder of the see.

<sup>1</sup> This form of legend seems to have some especial connection with

The arrival of St. Apollinaris at Ravenna was signa-  
 lised by the restoration of sight to a blind boy. He  
 overthrew the idols of the false gods, healed lepers,  
 raised a young man from the dead, cast out devils,  
 baptized multitudes in the river Bedens, in the sea, and  
 in the Basilica of St. Euphemia, where once more the  
 hard stone upon which he was standing became soft  
 and retained the impress of his feet. When persecution  
 arose he was loaded with heavy chains and sent to the  
 'capitol' of Ravenna, where angels ministered to him.  
 Three years of exile in Illyricum and Thrace followed:  
 on his return he was again seized by the persecutors,  
 forced to stand upon burning coals, and subjected to  
 other tortures, which he bore with great meekness,  
 only addressing the Imperial Vicar as a most impious  
 man, and warning him to escape from eternal torture  
 by accepting the true faith. At length he received the  
 crown of martyrdom during the reign of the Emperor  
 Vespasian, a name which is not usually branded with  
 the stigma of persecution.

BOOK I.  
 CH. 19.

How much of the story which is here related obtained  
 credence in the fifth century we cannot precisely say,  
 for our chief authority is Agnellus, who lived a genera-  
 tion later than the Emperor Charles the Great. Yet  
 the evidence of the Basilicas of the Honorian period

Lives  
 of the  
 Bishops of  
 Ravenna  
 by Agnel-  
 lus.

the memory of St. Peter, probably on account of his name ('a rock').  
 All visitors to Rome will remember the cavity in the rocky side of the  
 Mamertine prison, marking the place where a cruel gaoler dashed the  
 Apostle's head against the wall. The impressions of the feet of Christ  
 on stone, shown in the church of St. Sebastian, and copied in that of  
 'Domine quo vadis,' seem to belong to the same class of traditions.  
 And the author from whom the account in the text is taken speaks of  
 a Monastery of St. Peter in the Janiculum, where the stone, wax-like,  
 retained the impress of the knee of St. Peter, praying.



BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

and that immediately following it, shows that the names of St. Apollinaris and others illustrated by the catalogue of Agnellus, were already considered holy. True, this chronicler, with more candour than many of his tribe, remarks<sup>1</sup>, 'Where I have not found any history of these bishops, and have not been able by conversation with aged men, or inspection of the monuments, or from any other authentic source, to obtain information concerning them, in such a case, that there might not be a break in the series, I have composed the life *myself* with the help of God and the prayers of the brethren.' But notwithstanding this honest avowal, as it is clear that he wrote from frequent reference to mosaic pictures, many of which are now lost, we may conjecture that he represents, fairly enough, the traditions of the fifth and sixth centuries, though with some subsequent legendary incrustations which we should now vainly seek to remove.

The quaint and vivid details of the personal appearance of the bishops seems to confirm the supposition that Agnellus wrote much on the authority of the mosaics. Thus, one bishop 'was bent double by the too great fulness of his years<sup>2</sup>;' another 'was crowned with the grace of white hairs;' another's 'countenance, like a clear mirror, shone over the whole congregation;' and so on.

The story of the election and episcopate of Severus<sup>3</sup>, a bishop of the fourth century, must have been still fresh

<sup>1</sup> In the Life of St. Exuperantius (Muratori's *Scriptores Rerum Italicarum*, ii. 62).

<sup>2</sup> 'Pro nimia dierum plenitudine curvus effectus est.' (Agnellus ap. Muratori, ii. 33.)

<sup>3</sup> 'Severus cujus nomen intelligitur in compositione *Saevusverus*,' remarks Agnellus, with whom philology is not a strong point.



in the minds of the people of Ravenna when Placidia reigned there, and it would be interesting to know what shape it had then assumed. Four hundred years later it was told on this wise. Severus was a journeyman woolcomber, and one day when he was wearied with his work, he said to his wife who wrought with him, 'I will go and see this wonderful sight, how a dove shall descend from the high heaven and light upon the head of him who is to be chosen bishop.' For this was the day of the election of a new bishop of Ravenna, and it was the special boast of the Church of that city that her prelates were thus manifestly designated by the descent of a dove from heaven.

But the wife of Severus began to mock at him, and to scold him, saying, 'Sit here ; go on with thy work ; do not be lazy ; whether thou goest or not, the people will not choose thee for Pontiff.' But he pressed, 'Let me go,' and she said, jeeringly, 'Go, then, and thou wilt be ordained Pontiff in the same hour.' So he rose, and went to the place where the people with their priests were gathered together ; but having his dirty working clothes on, he hid himself behind the door of the place where the people were praying.

As soon as the prayer was ended, a dove, whiter than snow, descended from heaven and lighted upon his head. He drove it away, but it settled there a second and a third time. Thereupon all the authorities who were present crowded round him, giving thanks to God, and hailed Severus as bishop. His wife, too, who before had mocked at him, now met him with congratulations. The woolcomber-bishop appears to have occupied the episcopal throne for many years. He sat in the Council of Sardica in 344, and subscribed the decrees which

BOOK I. refused to make any alteration in the Nicene For-  
 CH. 19. mula.

After some time, his wife Vicentia (or Vincentia) died, and, some years later, his daughter Innocentia. When the mourners came together to lay Innocentia in her mother's tomb, it was found to be too small to hold both bodies. Severus, mindful evidently of many a matrimonial altercation in long-past years, cried out, 'Ah! wife, why wilt thou be thus vexatious unto me? Why not leave room for thy daughter, and receive back from my hands her whom I once received from thine? Let the burial proceed in peace, and do not sadden me by thy obstinacy.' At these words the bones of his dead wife gathered themselves together, and rolled away into one corner of the stone coffin with a swiftness which the living body could scarcely have equalled, and room was left for the dead Innocentia by her side. When his own time came to die, after celebrating mass, he ordered the same coffin to be opened, and, arrayed as he was in his pontifical robes, he laid him down between his dead wife and child, and there drew his last breath<sup>1</sup>.

The chronology of the see of Ravenna at this period is very confused, but Severus appears to have ended his episcopate about the middle of the Fourth Century. Near the close of that century lived Ursus, who built the great cathedral which still bears his name. During

<sup>1</sup> In the ninth century the bodies of St. Severus and of Saints Vincentia and Innocentia (for the whole family was by this time canonised) were abstracted, by fraud or force, from their resting-place at Ravenna, and carried to Mayence and thence to Erfurt. Father Bacchini, writing about 1708, congratulates his dear friend the Abbot of the Monastery of Classis on having recovered a considerable portion of the body of the saint and restored it to its home, 'a benefit which the Church of Ravenna will keep in everlasting remembrance.'



Il Mulino del



PLACIDIA'S VISION OF ST JOHN FROM A BAC RELIEF IN THE  
TYMPANUM OF S GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA AT RAVENNA

25 Kentish Town Furnival St Holborn, London, E.



the first half of the fifth century, the two most honoured names in the hagiology of Ravenna were those of John the Angel-seer (Joannes Angeloptes) and Peter the Golden-worded (Petrus Chrysologus). The former was so called on account of the tradition that shortly before his death, when he was celebrating mass in the Church of St. Agatha, an angel descended at the words of consecration, and standing beside him at the altar, handed him the chalice and paten, fulfilling throughout the service the office of an acolyte. Peter, who, like Chrysostom, received his surname from the golden stores of his wisdom and eloquence, was no citizen or priest of Ravenna, but a native of Imola, who was designated for the high office of bishop by the voice of Pope Sixtus III, in accordance with the apostolic monition of St. Peter and St. Apollinaris conveyed to him in a dream. Notwithstanding his alien extraction, no name is now more living in Ravenna than that of 'San Pier Crisologo,' who built the marvellously beautiful little chapel in the Archbishop's Palace, on whose vaulted ceiling four great white-robed angels, standing between the emblems of the four Evangelists, support with uplifted arms, not a world, nor a heavenly throne, but the intertwined letters X P, the mystic monogram of Christ.

It was into this world of ecclesiastical romance, of embellishment by legend and by mosaic, that Galla Placidia entered when she returned to Ravenna, destined herself to contribute no unimportant share to its temples and to its traditions. Near her palace she built the Church of the Holy Cross, now ruined and modernised. But a much more interesting monument to her fame is the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, now flanked by the Strada Garibaldi and the road to the railway-

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Joannes  
Ange-  
loptes.

Petrus  
Chryso-  
logus.

Placidia  
builds the  
church of  
St. John  
the Evan-  
gelist



BOOK I. station. The basilica itself was rebuilt in the twelfth  
 CH. 19. or thirteenth century, and its mosaics have been for the  
 most part replaced by the frescoes of Giotto; but a  
 bas-relief over the chief entrance, sculptured at the time  
 of the rebuilding, still retains, not indeed the contem-  
 porary, but the mythical portraiture of the Augusta  
 herself. There she is represented as prostrating herself  
 at the feet of the Evangelist, who is arrayed in priestly  
 garb, and engaged in incensing the altar. Meanwhile  
 his Imperial worshipper clasps his feet, and with gentle  
 compulsion constrains him to leave one of his sandals in  
 her hands.

to com-  
 memorate  
 her de-  
 liverance  
 from ship-  
 wreck.

This bas-relief, executed about 800 years after the  
 death of Placidia, illustrates, not inaptly, the growth of  
 ecclesiastical tradition. On her voyage from Constan-  
 tinople to Ravenna, the Augusta and her children were  
 terrified by the arising of a great storm, which threat-  
 ened to overwhelm them in the deep. In her distress she  
 vowed a temple to the son of Zebedee—himself a fisher-  
 man, and well acquainted with stormy seas—if he would  
 deliver her from so great a danger. The wind ceased,  
 she reached Italy in safety, and, as we have already  
 seen, wrested the sceptre from the hands of Joannes the  
 Notary. In fulfilment of her vow she built the Basilica  
 of St. John the Evangelist, had it consecrated either by  
 Joannes Angeloptes or Petrus Chrysologus, and bade  
 the mosaics on the walls and even the wavy outlines of  
 the pavement tell the story of her escape<sup>1</sup>. Round the

<sup>1</sup> ‘Jubet Augusta ubique naufragii sui praesentari formam, ut quod-  
 ammodo tota operis facies Reginae pericula loqueretur. Pavimentum  
 undosum undique mare quod quasi ventis agitatum procellosae tem-  
 pestatis gerat imaginem’ (Spicilegium Ravennatis Historiae ap.  
 Muratori, tom. i, pars 2, p. 568).

apse of the basilica, and over the heads of the mosaic portraits of the Imperial family, ran this inscription: 'Strengthen, O Lord, that which thou hast wrought for us: because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.' And higher yet was an inscription to this effect: 'To the Holy and Most Blessed Apostle John the Evangelist. Galla Placidia Augusta, with her son Placidus Valentinianus Augustus and her daughter Justa Grata Honoria Augusta, in fulfilment of a vow for deliverance from peril by sea.'

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Agnelli  
Liber Pontificalis (ap.  
Muratori,  
ii. 68).

So far the contemporary monuments as described, faithfully no doubt, by Agnellus, in the ninth century. Four hundred years later, when the original church had fallen into ruin and was replaced by a new edifice of Italian-Gothic architecture, a legend had grown up that the Augusta, when she had built her church, was filled with sadness by the thought that she had no relic of the Apostle wherewith to enrich it. She imparted her grief to her confessor, St. Barbatian, and besought his prayers. At length, upon a certain night which they had determined to spend in watching and prayer in the precincts of the church itself, it came to pass that they both fell into a light slumber. To Barbatian, between sleeping and waking, appeared a man with noble countenance, vestments of snowy whiteness, and with a golden censer in his hand. The confessor awoke, the form did not vanish, he pointed it out to the Augusta, who rushed forward and seized his right sandal with eager hands. Then the Apostle John, for he it must have been, vanished from their sight, and was carried up into heaven. The 27th of February, when this event was supposed to have occurred, was kept as a festival by the Church of Ravenna, 'but the place where the

The legend  
of the  
Sandal of  
St. John.

BOOK I. sandal was laid up by the Empress is unknown to all  
 CH. 19. men. Meanwhile in *many* places is still to be seen a title, writ long ago, to this effect: (Here) rests the Sandal of the Blessed Apostle and Evangelist John<sup>1</sup>.

Other  
 ecclesiastical  
 legends  
 about the  
 family of  
 Placidia.

Nor was Placidia's the only head which was surrounded with this halo of ecclesiastical tradition. It was believed (at the time of Agnellus) that to a niece of hers, named Singleida, as to whose existence history is silent, appeared in vision a man in white raiment and with hoary hair, who said to her, 'In such and such a place, near the church which thy aunt hath reared to the Holy Cross do thou build a monastery, and name it after me, Zacharias, the father of the Fore-runner' [John the Baptist]. She went to the place next day, and saw a foundation already prepared for the building, as if by the hand of man. She returned with joy to her aunt, and received from her thirteen builders, by whose labours, in thirteen days, the house was finished, which she then adorned with all manner of gold and silver and precious stones.

It is remarkable that the ecclesiastical historian, Sozomen, in closing his history, comments on the special favour shown by God to the Emperor Honorius, in permitting the relics of many holy men to be discovered during his reign. Chief among these discoveries was that of the body of Zachariah, son of Jehoiada, slain by the command of Joash, king of Judah. A richly-dressed infant lay at the feet of the holy man, and was believed to be the child of the idolatrous king, whose death was the punishment of his father's sin, and who was therefore buried in the grave of the victim. The identity of

<sup>1</sup> See, for further comments on this story, Hemans' *Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art*, 358-360.

the name suggests the probability that the vision of the unknown Singleida and the discovery of the relics of the prophet may be variations of one and the same story.

But it is time to leave the moonlight of ecclesiastical tradition, and come back into secular history.

Two great events, both of them calamities, marked the quarter of a century of Placidia's reign, for during the whole of this time Placidia truly reigned, though her son's effigy appeared on the coins. They were the Vandal invasion of Africa and the uprising of the power of Attila, king of the Huns. These events will be dealt with more fully in the next volume, and as the appearance of the Huns in Italy preceded that of the Vandals, we shall have to deal with their story first, though strictly speaking the Vandal was the terror of the earlier, and the Hun of the later years of Placidia and her counsellors.

But as the loss of Africa is said to have resulted from a certain ill-advised step taken by Placidia, it will be well to narrate here so much of the story of that event as is connected with the Empress herself, and the feud between her two chief advisers, Bonifacius and Aetius. 'Each of these men,' says Procopius, 'had the other not been his contemporary, might truly have been called the last of the Romans.' We may add that each alone might have possibly saved the life of the Empire, or at least prolonged it for a century, but that their contemporaneous existence destroyed it.

The chorus of a Greek tragedy would have found in the parallel history of these two men a congenial subject for its meditations on the strange ways of the Gods and the irony of Fate. Bonifacius, the heroic, loyal-



BOOK I. hearted soldier, 'whose one great object was the  
CH. 19. deliverance of Africa from all sorts of barbarians<sup>1</sup>,  
 stands conspicuous to all after-ages as the betrayer of  
 Africa to the Vandals: Aetius, the brave captain, but  
 also the shifty intriguer, Roman by birth, but half-  
 barbarian by long residence at the Hunnish Court,  
 deserves the everlasting gratitude of posterity as the  
 chief deliverer of Europe from the dominion of Attila,  
 as he who more than any other individual man kept for  
 the Romance and Teutonic nations a clear course to glory  
 and happiness, free from the secular misery and desola-  
 tion which are the effects of Tartar misrule.

Past  
 services of  
 Bonifacius.

We first hear of Bonifacius<sup>2</sup> in the year 412 as  
 repelling a sudden assault of Ataulfus in the city of  
 Marseilles. The Gothic king was wounded by Boni-  
 facius himself, and hardly escaping death fled to his  
 own encampment, leaving the city in joy and triumph,  
 and all the citizens sounding the praises of the most  
 noble Bonifacius. Our next clear trace of him is in the  
 year 422. An expedition has been ordered against the  
 Vandals in Spain. Castinus, at that time the chief  
 Minister at War of Honorius, decides to take the chief  
 command, but will give no suitable place on his staff to  
 Bonifacius, notwithstanding the renown for skill in war  
 which he has already acquired. Thereupon Bonifacius  
 refusing to serve under this insolent commander in any  
 subordinate post breaks away from the expedition alto-  
 gether, journeys rapidly to Portus, and thence sets sail  
 for Africa. We know nothing of the circumstances in  
 which that province was left after the revolt of Hera-  
 clian had been quelled, but in the general paralysis

<sup>1</sup> Olympiodorus, Fr. 42 (ed. Müller).

<sup>2</sup> From Olympiodorus, Fr. 21 (Ibid.).



of authority which resulted from the incapacity of Honorius it would almost seem as if Africa had become a sort of No-man's land, which any stout soldier might enter and rule if he would only defend it from the ever more desolating raids of the tribes of Mount Atlas. This service, Bonifacius, though holding only the rank of Tribune, did effectually perform. The irregularity, if such it was, of his first occupation of the seat of government<sup>1</sup> was apparently condoned, and the legitimacy of his position was assured when after the death of Joannes, the aspiring notary, whom his old enemy Castinus had robed in the purple. Amid the general defection from the Theodosian house Bonifacius alone preserved his loyalty, sending large sums from his wealthy province to Placidia, and throwing all his energies into her service<sup>2</sup>. And in fact, as we are expressly told, it was the necessity under which the usurper found himself of sending large detachments of troops for the re-conquest of Africa which more than anything else promoted the success of the expedition of Ardaburius and Aspar<sup>3</sup>.

Bonifacius had a high reputation for justice and even for holiness. His justice was shown when a peasant came to his tent to complain that his wife had been seduced by one of the barbarian mercenaries in the army of Bonifacius. The general desired the complainant to return on the morrow; meanwhile, at dead of night, he rode a distance of nine miles to the peasant's

His justice  
and holi-  
ness.

<sup>1</sup> This is probably what is meant by Idatius, s. a. 421, 'Bonifacius palatium deserens Africam *invadit*.'

<sup>2</sup> Olympiodorus, Fr. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Prosper, s. a. 424.

BOOK I. house, satisfied himself of the truth of the accusation,  
 CH. 19. — was himself both judge and executioner, and returned to his tent with the head of the offender, which next morning he exhibited to the husband, astonished, but delighted at the swift foot of avenging Justice.

His holiness—as that age accounted holiness—was shown by a correspondence with Augustine, which induced him, after the death of his wife, to take a vow against re-marriage, though without retiring from the active business of life. This vow he afterwards broke, taking to himself a rich wife named Pelagia, who was doubly objectionable to his spiritual advisers as a woman and as an Arian ; and modern ecclesiastical commentators<sup>1</sup> trace to this fall from the high ideal of ascetic virtue the whole of his subsequent errors and calamities.

Early  
 career of  
 Aetius.

Such then was the career and such the high reputation of Bonifacius. Aetius, his great rival, was born at Durostorum, a town on the Lower Danube, well known to us under the name of Silistria. His father, Gaudentius, a man probably of barbarian origin, rose high in the service of the Western Empire, being successively Master of the Cavalry and Count of Africa. In this latter capacity he was entrusted by Honorius with a commission to root out idolatry and destroy the idol-temples in Carthage. At a later period he figures as Master of the Soldiery in Gaul, and while holding that command was killed by his own soldiers in a mutiny. Aetius himself when quite young, and serving among the Imperial Guards, was given over as a hostage to Alaric, and remained in that condition in the Gothic

<sup>1</sup> Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, vi. 190), and Baronius as quoted by him.

camp for three years. Later on, he was again given, probably by Honorius, as a hostage to the Huns. The hardy and athletic young soldier seems to have made many friends among the barbarian armies; perhaps, also, he acquired a knowledge both of their strong and weak points, which made him a wiser enemy when he had to take the field against them than the incompetent generals of Honorius.

After the death of the latter Emperor, he adhered to the faction of the Secretary Joannes, who, in the crisis of his own affairs, sent Aetius northward to obtain assistance from his friendly Huns. He returned with 60,000 Huns at his back, but only to find that the power of Joannes had, three days before, fallen before the armies of Placidia. It is said that a battle between the Huns and the forces of Aspar, the Byzantine general, then took place. We may conjecture that it was but a hollow contest, meant to enhance the price of peace. At any rate, we find the barbarians shortly after concluding a treaty with the Romans, under which they receive a sum of gold, and agree to return quietly to their homes. Aetius does not suffer by the general reconciliation. He is raised to the rank of Count (probably Count of Italy), and becomes thenceforward the chief adviser of Placidia and her son.

It was not unnatural that between these two, who were now the foremost men of the Empire—Bonifacius, *Vir Spectabilis, Comes Africae*, and Aetius, *Vir Spectabilis, Comes Italiae*—rivalry and dissension should arise. Bonifacius felt that his lifelong fidelity to the house of Theodosius was scantily rewarded by his mistress. Aetius could not deem himself secure in his post of confidential adviser at the Court of Ravenna, while

BOOK I. there ruled at Carthage a man with such transcendent  
CH. 19. claims upon the Imperial gratitude.

De Bello  
Vandalico,  
i. 3.

The manner in which this rivalry worked out into daylight is disclosed to us only by Procopius, one of the most cynical of historians, and separated by nearly a century from the events which he records. One cannot therefore claim the reader's entire confidence for the story which follows, but it must be told thus because no other version of it has come down to us<sup>1</sup>.

Plot of  
Aetius  
against  
Bonifacius.

It appears, from the not very precise language of Procopius, that during a visit of Count Bonifacius to the Imperial Court, Placidia had bestowed upon him some higher rank than he already bore, in connection with the government of the African province<sup>2</sup>. Aetius concealed his real dissatisfaction at this promotion of his rival under a mask of apparent contentment and even friendship for Bonifacius. But as soon as he had returned to Africa, the Count of Italy began to instil into the mind of Placidia suspicions that Bonifacius would prove another Gildo, usurping supreme authority over the whole of Roman Africa<sup>3</sup>. 'The proof,' said he, 'of the truth of these accusations was easy. For if she

<sup>1</sup> [I have left the Procopian story of the fall of Bonifacius as it stood in the first edition. It will be seen that I had then grave doubts as to its accuracy, and since I wrote, it has been subjected to a severe and searching investigation by Professor Freeman (Historical Review, July, 1887). His judgment is decidedly adverse to what he terms 'the Procopian legend,' which he must be admitted to have grievously shaken, if he have not altogether overthrown it. I refer the reader to Note L at the end of this chapter for a fuller discussion of the subject.]

<sup>2</sup> The office which he now received was probably that of Comes Domesticorum, which conferred upon the holder 'Illustrious' rank.

<sup>3</sup> 'Africa,' as thus used, does not of course include either Egypt or the Cyrenaica, which formed parts of the Eastern Empire.

summoned him to her presence, he would not obey the order.' The Augusta listened, thought the words of Aetius full of wisdom, obeyed his counsels, and summoned Bonifacius to Ravenna. Meanwhile Aetius wrote privately to the African Count, 'The Augusta is plotting to rid herself of you. The proof of her finally adopting that resolution will be your receipt of a letter from her, ordering you, for no earthly reason, to wait upon her in Italy.' Bonifacius, believing his rival's professions of friendship, accepted the warning, refused to obey the Empress's summons, and thereby at once confirmed her worst suspicions. In the year 427 he was declared a public enemy of Rome.

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Feeling himself too weak to grapple with the Empire alone, Bonifacius began to negotiate for the alliance of the Vandals, who were still struggling with Visigoths and Suevi for the mastery of that Spain which they had all made desolate. The Vandals came, under their young king Gaiseric, and never returned to the Peninsula.

Bonifacius  
calls in the  
Vandals.

428.

The details of the Vandal conquest of Africa, which occupied the years from 428 to 439, are postponed to a later portion of this history; our present business is only with the unhappy author of all those miseries which marked its progress. Not many months after Gaiseric had landed in Africa, some old friends of Bonifacius at Rome, who could not reconcile his present disloyalty with what they knew of his glorious past, crossed the seas and visited him at Carthage<sup>1</sup>. He consented to see them; mutual explanations followed,

The plot of  
Aetius ex-  
posed and  
Bonifacius  
cleared.

<sup>1</sup> Tillemont thinks that this reconciliation was effected by a certain Count Darius, a correspondent of Augustine's whom the Saint congratulates on having 'killed war' (Ep. 229 and 230).



BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

the letter of Aetius was produced, and the whole web of treachery was at once in their hands. They returned with speed to Placidia, who, though she did not feel herself, in that sore emergency, strong enough to break with Aetius, sent, nevertheless, assurance of her forgiveness to Bonifacius and earnest entreaties to forsake his barbarian alliances and re-enter the service of Rome. He obeyed, but could not now conjure down the storm which he had raised. He made magnificent promises to the Vandals if they would consent to quit Africa. They laughed at his promises; the Vandal vulture had her talons too deep in the rich province of Africa to have any thought of returning to Spain, where her sister birds of prey would have given her a gory welcome.

Bonifacius  
returns to  
Italy

And thus it came to pass that Bonifacius was soon engaged in battle against his previous allies. In the year 431 he fought with some success, but in 432, though he had received large reinforcements from Constantinople under the command of Aspar, he was utterly beaten by the Vandals in a pitched battle, and compelled to fly to Italy. Notwithstanding his defeat, he was received with enthusiasm at Rome, and with perfect trustfulness and oblivion of his past disloyalty by Placidia<sup>1</sup>. She conferred upon him the title of *Magister utriusque Militiæ*, which had been borne for three years by his rival Aetius, and she seems to have been about to bestow upon him her full confidence, and to make him virtually chief ruler of the Empire. At this point, however, Aetius reappeared upon the scene, fresh from a successful war against the Franks. A battle ensued

and is slain  
by Aetius  
in single  
combat,

<sup>1</sup> The remainder of this paragraph is not derived from Procopius, but from the annalists Prosper and Marcellinus, especially the latter.

between them, in which Aetius was defeated ; but in the single combat which took place, and which seems already to show the influence of Teutonic usages on the dying world of classicalism, Bonifacius received a wound from a javelin (or dart) of unusual length, with which his enemy had provided himself on the eve of the combat, and from the effects of that wound he died three months after.

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

432.

Though there is so much of fraudulent intrigue about the conduct of Aetius, it is impossible not to feel a kind of foretaste of the coming age of chivalry about the five years' duel between these two mighty champions, 'each one worthy to have been called the last of Romans.' Nor is this impression weakened when we find Bonifacius on his death-bed exhorting his wife to accept no one's hand in re-marriage but his rival's only, 'if his wife, who was then living, should die.' The ecclesiastical advisers of the Count of Africa perhaps would see in this strange command a legacy of woe such as the dying Centaur bequeathed to his victor, Hercules, and might thus claim Bonifacius himself as a voucher for their theory that his second marriage had been his ruin. But a more probable explanation of the story, be it true or false, is the popular belief that each hero recognised in the other his only worthy competitor in war, in politics, or in love.

As for Aetius, he did not immediately regain his old position at the Court of Ravenna. The remembrance of his treacheries was too vivid, the power of the party of Bonifacius still too strong, and he was fain to betake himself once more to exile among the friendly Huns. Again he was restored to power, apparently by their aid, in the year 433, and for the remaining seventeen

Aetius  
chief  
minister  
of Placidia  
for the last  
seventeen  
years of  
her reign

BOOK I. years of the joint reign of Placidia and Valentinian he  
 CH. 19. was, as before, the ruling spirit of the Western Empire. He was often battling in the distracted province of Gaul, with Visigoths, with Burgundians, with Franks, and generally obtained successes in the field; but no military successes could root out the barbarian multitudes from the Gaulish soil, or do more than keep alive some semblance of Imperial authority in certain of the towns by the Rhone and the Garonne and in the mountain fastnesses of Auvergne.

The legend  
 of 'The  
 Groans  
 of the  
 Britons.'

It is during this period and in the year 446 that the well-known legend related by Gildas (a rhetorical and untrustworthy historian) places the abject supplication, entitled 'The Groans of the Britons. To Aetius for the third time Consul. The barbarians drive us to the sea: the sea drives us back upon the barbarians,' and so forth. It is a tribute to the greatness of Aetius that, even in a legend like this, the appeal should be represented as being addressed to him rather than to his Imperial masters.

Marriage  
 of Valen-  
 tinian III  
 with his  
 cousin,  
 Eudoxia,  
 437.

Four years after Aetius' restoration to power an event happened which threw a gleam of gladness over the clouded horizon of the Court at Ravenna. This was the marriage of Valentinian III with Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius II. The two cousins had been betrothed to one another while yet children during Placidia's exile at Constantinople<sup>1</sup>, and now in the nineteenth year of his age the young Augustus of the West set forth to claim his Imperial bride. Theodosius offered to meet his intended son-in-law at Thessalonica, and celebrate the nuptials there<sup>2</sup>, but Valentinian cour-

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, vii. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 44.

teously waived the offer, and passed on to Constantinople, where, in the presence of a brilliant throng of courtiers from both sections of the Empire, he received from the Patriarch Proclus the hand of the princess, the daughter of the beautiful Athenian, the grand-daughter of the beautiful Frank, and herself perhaps not less beautiful than either. As the only child of the Emperor of the East she might reasonably cherish the hope of bearing to Valentinian a son who should one day rule over the whole re-united Empire: but far other was the destiny reserved for her and for her offspring in the days that were to come<sup>2</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.  
29<sup>1</sup> October, 437.

In their political aspect, the twenty-five years of the reign of Placidia represent the slow settling down of the Roman Empire of the West into irretrievable ruin and disorganisation. There was during this interval no great stroke of the enemy upon Italy itself, such as Alaric's three sieges of Rome; on the contrary, the soil of Italy seems to have enjoyed a strange immunity from barbarian invasion. But the hope of recovering any of the lost provinces of the Empire—Britain, Gaul, Spain—was becoming more and more visionary; the crowns of the barbarian kings were passing from father to son, and the new intruding dynasties were deriving a sanction and a kind of legitimacy from time.

Political aspect of Placidia's reign.

Meanwhile Africa, the great granary of Rome, was

Separation of Africa from the Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Chronicon Paschale, Prosper, and Marcellinus.

<sup>2</sup> Of this marriage Cassiodorus says (Var. xi. 1): 'Placidia obtained a daughter-in-law by the loss of Illyricum, and the marriage of the ruler was the cause of a lamentable loss of his provinces.' This probably means (as Gùldenpenning and others interpret it) that on the occasion of the marriage Valentinian surrendered to his father-in-law the province of Dalmatia. This statement, if true, throws a little light on the difficult question discussed on p. 678.



BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

being severed from the Empire. We need only turn back to Claudian's picture of the distress occasioned by Gildo's usurpation, to know what that involved for Italy and Rome. If one year's stoppage of the supplies of African grain had caused the Mistress of the World to 'speak low as out of the dust,' and 'all the faces of her citizens to gather blackness,' what must, first the devastation, and then the permanent hostile occupation, of the province have done? Soon after Alaric's sieges, as we have been told by Olympiodorus, the population came flocking back into Rome at the rate of 14,000 a day, so that the former largesse of victuals was no longer found sufficient. Now, we may fairly conjecture, the Imperial largesse would no longer be given. 'Circenses,' (at least the gladiatorial part of them) had been stopped by the command of the Most Christian Emperor; the more needful 'Panis' would have to be stopped also, however reluctantly, by his sister; and we shall surely not be wrong in supposing that now commenced that decline in the population of the Imperial City, which went on at a still more rapid rate in the latter half of the century.

Fortunes of  
some of the  
Roman  
nobles still  
unim-  
paired.

Still, however, the fortunes of the great Roman nobility survived in some of their old magnificence. It is of a time nearly coincident with the commencement of Placidia's rule that Olympiodorus writes when he tells that every one of the great houses of Rome had in it all the appliances which a well-ordered city might be expected to contain—a hippodrome and forum, temples and fountains and magnificent baths. At sight of all this stateliness the historian exclaimed—

'One house is a town by itself: ten thousand towns to the city'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Εἰς δόμος ἄστὺ πέλει· πόλις ἄστυ μυρία κεύθει. (Fr. 43).



Many Roman families received revenues of 4000 pounds of gold (£160,000) yearly, besides corn and wine and other produce, which, if sold, would bring in one-third of that amount. The noble families of the second rank received from £40,000 to £60,000 per annum. Probus, the son of Olympius, who was prefect of the city during the short-lived tyranny of Joannes, spent £48,000 in order to illustrate his year of office. Symmachus the orator, who as we have seen was a senator of moderate rank, spent £80,000 over the shows of his son's praetorship. This, it is true, was before the taking of Rome by Alaric. Even he however was surpassed by a certain Maximus, who, upon *his* son's praetorial games, expended no less than £160,000. And the shows upon which these large sums of money were lavished lasted only for one week.

To Placidia herself and her innermost circle of friends it is probable that the ecclesiastical aspect of her reign, as has been hinted in the description of her capital, seemed infinitely more important than the political. She signalised her accession to supreme power by the usual bead-roll of laws against the Jews, forbidding them to practise in the courts of law or to serve in the Imperial armies; against the Manicheans, the astrologers, and the heretics generally, banishing such even from the environs of the cities. At the same time she ordained that the clergy should be subject only to ecclesiastical judges, 'according to the ancient edicts.' It may be doubted whether this provision applies to civil rights and wrongs; and if any exemption from the ordinary tribunals in such cases were granted to them, it seems clear that it was revoked by an edict of her son,

BOOK I. two years after her death<sup>1</sup>. But the very discussion  
CH. 19. seems to show us the ecclesiastical theories of the Middle Ages asserting themselves by the death-bed of the classical mythology: seven centuries pass away like a dream, and we hear the voice of Becket arguing against the Constitutions of Clarendon.

The contro-  
 versy as to  
 the union  
 of the two  
 natures in  
 Christ.

For yet other reasons, the period during which Placidia presided over the destinies of the Western Empire looms large in the history of the Church. In the year 431 was held the Council of Ephesus, which anathematised the doctrine of Nestorius; in 451, the year after her death, the famous Council of Chalcedon condemned the opposite heresy of Dioscorus. During those twenty years therefore (and in the East for half a century longer) raged the furious and to us almost incomprehensible struggle concerning the two natures of Christ. Old and mighty states were falling to pieces; new and strange barbaric powers were enthroning themselves in the historic capitals of the West; shepherds were becoming kings, and patricians were being sold into slavery as swineherds; but still the interminable metaphysic talk flowed on. Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, said each his say. To them entered Protagoras and Gorgias, and the whole brilliant progeny of the sophists. With Oriental long-windedness and Hellenic subtlety they argued as to the precise limits of the divine and the human in the person of our Saviour; and an outbreak of insane monks, a robber-council beating a bishop to death, an insurrection of the Byzantine populace against their 'Manichean' Emperor varied the otherwise monotonous manufacture of creeds and anathemas.

<sup>1</sup> See Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, vi. 185 and 204.

The rage of this conflict, though felt in Italy, was not so fierce there as in the East ; and Placidia, more fortunate than her nephew Theodosius II, trod the narrow path of orthodoxy with reputation unimpaired, so that the ecclesiastical historians generally speak of her with high respect.

The weak point in her historical record is her failure to mould the character of her children. Both her son and her daughter in various ways, as we shall see hereafter, brought scandal and calamity upon the Empire by their sensualities. Procopius (whose delight it is to find fault) plainly accuses her of having given the young Valentinian an effeminate and enervating education, and invites us to conjecture that his character was thus intentionally enfeebled in order that his mother might retain the reins of power in her hands, after her duty as regent would naturally have terminated. The conjecture is an obvious one, but there does not seem to be any evidence to support it. Doubtless the relation of a Queen Mother to a son growing up to manhood is a difficult one at the best of times and where both are actuated by the highest principle. A better illustration of this could not perhaps be found than that which is afforded by Maria Theresa and the Emperor Joseph II. But Placidia, we must remember, was really the man of her family. She had the energy and the wisdom of her father ; her brothers, her son, her nephew exhibited through life that strange lethargy which at intervals crept even over him. And her husband, the coarse and brutal buffoon, may well have contributed to the natures both of Valentinian and Honoria a taint of sensuality which the wisest mother would have found it difficult to eradicate. The Theo-

BOOK I.  
CH. 19.

Placidia's  
failure  
with her  
children.

BOOK I. dosian sullenness and the Constantian vulgarity were  
 CH. 19. ——— poor materials out of which to form an Emperor of Rome.

Upon the whole issue, without palliating her alleged share in the judicial murder of Serena, or denying her ill-success in the training of her children, one may plead for a favourable verdict as to the character of Placidia. Her love for Ataulfus, her grief at his death, her brave endurance of the insults of his murderer, long ago enlisted me on her side ; and now, after carefully reading all that her detractors have to urge against her, I look upon her still as the sweetest and purest figure of that dreary time.

Death of  
 Placidia.

She died at Rome on the 27th November, 450<sup>1</sup>, near the 60th year of her age. Apparently the whole Imperial Court removed in this year to the city by the Tiber ; but Placidia's body was carried back to that Ravenna which she had so lavishly adorned.

Her mau-  
 soleum at  
 Ravenna.

The mausoleum of Galla Placidia, otherwise called the church of St. Nazarius and St. Celsus, is a little building shaped like a Latin cross, measuring about 38 feet by 30. At the centre of the cross you see above you a dome covered with mosaics. On a deep blue ground are scattered golden stars, and in the zenith is a jewelled cross. In the arches immediately below the dome stand eight prophets, two on each side of the square chapel. Below these again are other arches more deeply recessed ; in one of them the Good Shepherd, lifting his cross on high, sits surrounded by his sheep ; in another, Christ<sup>2</sup>, wielding his cross like

<sup>1</sup> 451 according to Idatius, but Prosper, who gives the date 450, is the safer guide.

<sup>2</sup> Or, according to one art-critic, not Christ, but St. Lawrence.



a sword, and by his form and attitude reminding one of the description in the first chapter of the Apocalypse, stands with an open book, probably the Gospel of St. Mark, in his hand; at a little distance off, an opened bookcase discloses the other three gospels; between him and them is a great brazier, in which heretical books, perhaps those of the Nestorians, are seen to be burning, the flames and the smoke being very vividly rendered. In each of the side arches corresponding to these, two stags, surmounted and surrounded with strange arabesques, are pressing through their intricacies to drink at a pool in the forest. All this picture-work is of course mosaic.

Below, on the floor of the chapel, stand three massive sarcophagi of Greek marble.

In the sarcophagus on the left repose the remains of Valentinian III and Constantius, the son and the husband of Placidia. In the bas-relief outside two lambs, standing between two palm-trees, look up to another lamb standing in the middle of the picture, upon a little eminence whence proceed four streams, probably the four rivers of Paradise. The glory round the head of this central figure and the anagram XP show that it is intended as a type of Christ.

The sarcophagus on the other side shows the central lamb (but without the glory round the head) standing on the hillock whence issue the four streams, together with three crosses. On the transverse bar of the central cross sit two doves, a somewhat unusual addition. The spiral columns, the pediment resting upon them, and some other features, remind us of the work of the *Renaissance*. Yet there is no doubt that all the mosaics and sculpture in the mausoleum of



BOOK I. Galla Placidia are entirely contemporary, fifth-century  
CH. 19. work.

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Let the beholder give one more look at that mighty sarcophagus on his right, for it contains all that earth is still cumbered with of Honorius.

At the end of the mausoleum, immediately behind the altar, which is made of semi-transparent alabaster, stands the largest of all the sarcophagi, which contains the ashes of Galla Placidia. There are no bas-reliefs on this tomb, which is said to have been once covered with silver plates, long since removed. For eleven centuries the embalmed body of the Augusta remained undisturbed in this tomb, sitting upright in a chair of cypress wood, and arrayed in royal robes. It was one of the sights of Ravenna to peep through a little hole in the back and see this changeless queen. But unhappily, three hundred years ago some careless or mischievous children, determined to have a thoroughly good look at the stately lady, thrust a lighted taper through the hole. Crowding and pushing, and each one bent on getting the best view possible, they at length brought the light too near to the corpse: at once royal robes and royal flesh and cypress wood chair were all wrapped in flames. In a few minutes the work of cremation was accomplished, and the daughter of Theodosius was reduced to ashes as effectually as any daughter of the Pagan Caesars.

With this anecdote of the year 1577 ends the story of Galla Placidia.

## NOTE L. BONIFACIUS AND AETIUS.

I shall give in this note a summary of the conclusions to NOTE L.  
 which I am brought by a study of the important article on this  
 subject contributed by Professor Freeman to the Historical  
 Review. 'The Procopian legend' of the feud between Placidia's  
 two chief counsellors, and the curious addition from Marcellinus  
 about the single combat in which it ended, have been given in  
 the text. Professor Freeman throws suspicion on almost every  
 part of the story, chiefly because of the contradiction which he  
 finds to exist between it and the notices in Prosper's chronicle.  
 It must be emphatically stated that for all this part of the  
 history, from 425-441 (Olympiodorus to Priscus) we have no  
 contemporary historian to guide us. Procopius is an invaluable  
 historian for his own times, but he lived a hundred years after  
 the events with which we are now dealing, and he is often  
 strangely misinformed as to matters which lay so far behind  
 him. (For instance, he says that Joannes the Notary-Emperor  
 kept his usurped power for five years, whereas in reality only  
 about two years intervened between his elevation and his  
 deposition.) For contemporary information we must go to the  
 annalists, and of these incomparably the most important and  
 trustworthy is Prosper. I will quote here all the entries in  
 Prosper which bear on our present subject, requesting the reader  
 to watch especially for the names of four men, each of whom at  
 one time or another held the office of *Magister Militum*, Castinus,  
 Felix, Bonifacius, and Aetius.

' 422. Honorius for the 13th time, and Theodosius for the 10th time,  
 Consuls.

At this time an army was sent to Spain against the Vandals, under  
 the command of Castinus, who, by a foolish and insulting order,  
 excluded Bonifacius, though a man renowned for his skill in

## NOTE L.

war, from companionship in his expedition. The latter, deeming it to be both dangerous and degrading to follow a leader whom he had found to be both quarrelsome and arrogant, rushed hastily to the City's harbour (Portus?), and thence to Africa. This was the beginning of many sorrows to the Commonwealth.

## 423. Marinus and Asclepiodotus, Consuls.

Honorius dies, and Joannes seizes his throne, with the connivance, as was supposed, of Castinus, who commanded the army as *Magister Militum*.

## 424. Castinus and Victor, Consuls.

Theodosius makes his aunt's son Valentinian, Caesar, and sends him with his August mother to receive the kingdom, at a time when Joannes was weakened for purposes of defence by his endeavour to reconquer Africa which Bonifacius was holding.

## 425. Theodosius for the 11th time and Valentinian, Consuls.

Placidia Augusta and Valentinianus Caesar, by marvellous good luck, cut off the usurper Joannes. Aetius is pardoned because the Huns whom Joannes had sent for through his intervention were, also by his good offices, induced to return home. Castinus, however, was driven into exile, because it appeared that Joannes could not have assumed the Imperial dignity without his connivance.

Arles, a noble city of the Gauls, was attacked by the Goths with a large army, until, on the imminent approach of Aetius, they retired, not unpunished.

## 426. Theodosius for the 12th time and Valentinian for the 2nd time, Consuls.

Patroclus, Bishop of Arles, is slain, being mangled with many wounds by a certain barbarian Tribune, which crime was referred to the secret orders of Felix, Master of the Soldiery, to whose instigation also was attributed the murder of Titus the Deacon, a holy man who was engaged in distributing money to the poor at Rome.

## 427. Hierius and Ardabures [Ardaburius], Consuls.

At the bidding of Felix, war in the name of the State was declared on Bonifacius (whose influence and glory in Africa were increasing) because he had refused to come to Italy (Bonifacio, ejus potentia gloriaque in Africâ augebatur, bellum ad arbitrium Felicis, quia<sup>1</sup> ad Italiam venire abnuerat, publico nomine illatum est). The leaders of the expedition were Mavortius, Galbio, and Sinox. By

<sup>1</sup> Most MSS. read 'qui,' but there can be no doubt that 'quia' is the right reading.

the treachery of Sinox, Mavortius and Galbio were slain while they were besieging Bonifacius, and presently he himself, being detected by Bonifacius in deceitful practices, was put to death. Thereafter the sea was made a thoroughfare to the [barbarous] nations which were ignorant of the management of ships, their aid being invoked by the combatants. [Exinde gentibus quae uti navibus nesciebant, dum a concertantibus in auxilium vocantur, mare pervium factum est]: and the care of the war which had been begun against Bonifacius was transferred to Count Sigisvult. The nation of the Vandals crossed over from Spain to Africa.

428. Felix and Taurus, Consuls.

Part of Gaul bordering on the Rhine, which the Franks had appropriated for their own possession, was recovered by the arms of Count Aetius.

429. Florentius and Dionysius, Consuls.

Felix was advanced to the Patrician dignity, and Aetius was made Master of the Soldiery.

430. Theodosius for the 13th time and Valentinian for the 3rd time, Consuls.

Aetius, having been forewarned that Felix, with his wife Padusia and the deacon Grunnitus, were laying snares against him, slew them. The Bishop Augustine, a man in all ways most excellent, dies on the 28th August, being engaged at the very end of his life, and amid of the besieging Vandals, in replying to the books of Julian, and gloriously persevering in the defence of Christian grace.

432. Aetius and Valerius, Consuls.

Bonifacius came from Africa through the city [Rome? or Carthage?] to Italy, having received the dignity of Master of the Soldiery. Having overcome in battle Aetius, who was resisting him, he died of disease a few days after. But Aetius, when, having laid aside his power, he was living on his own land, was there attacked by a certain enemy of his, who endeavoured to cut him off by a sudden onslaught, and fleeing to the city, and thence to Dalmatia, finally arrived at Pannonia and the dwellings of the Huns, whose friendship and help he used to obtain peace from the sovereigns, and the right to resume the power which he had lost: [quorum amicitia auxilioque usus pacem principum et jus interpolatae potestatis obtinuit.]

Idatius, for the year 422, gives us this information:—

‘Castinus, Master of the Soldiery, with a great force and with

## NOTE L.

Gothic auxiliaries, wages war in Baetica against the Vandals. Whom, when he had reduced by blockade to such extremities that they were already preparing to surrender, he rashly engaged with them in a pitched battle, was deceived by the bad faith of his auxiliaries, and fled to Tarragona, a beaten man.

Bonifacius, deserting the palace, intrudes on Africa [Africam invadit].

We must now make a few extracts from the Pseudo-Prosper, though he darkens counsel by his terrible confusion of dates.

424. First year of Theodosius II (after the death of Honorius).

Placidia sends to Theodosius to pray for help. Sigisvuldus hastened to Africa against Bonifacius.

425. Aetius, son of Count Gaudentius, who was slain by the soldiers in Gaul, enters Italy with the Huns to bring help to Joannes.

427. Arles is delivered from the Goths by Aetius.

431. About 20,000 soldiers of those who are warring in Spain against the Vandals are cut to pieces. The Vandals, crossing over the straits to Africa, caused great slaughter among the Romans, harrying the whole province.

432. Aetius, having celebrated his entry on the Consulship, desires to avoid Bonifacius, who on the summons of the Empress [*Regina*] had arrived from Africa, and accordingly ascends to more fortified places [*ad munitiora conscendit*].

The sharpness of the excessive cold proved fatal even to the life of a great many people. Bonifacius being wounded in a contest which he had against Aetius, departed conqueror indeed, but about to die.

433. When Aetius betook himself after the battle to the nation of the Huns, over which Rugila then presided, he obtained help and returned to the Roman soil. The Goths were invited by the Romans to bring them aid.

434. Aetius is received into favour. Rugila, king of the Huns, with whom peace is confirmed, dies, and is succeeded by Bleda.

We must add one extract from Marcellinus Comes (circa 530-560).

Fifteenth Indiction: Valerius and Aetius, Consuls [432].

By the instigation [instinctu] of Placidia, the mother of the Emperor Valentinian, a great war was waged between Bonifacius and Aetius, Patricians. Aetius, having the day before prepared for himself a longer spear than that of Bonifacius, wounded Boni-



facius in the *melée* [congre<sup>d</sup>ientem], being himself unhurt: and in the third month Bonifacius died of the wound which he had received, exhorting Pelagia, his wife, a very wealthy woman, to marry no one else unless it were Aetius.' NOTE L.

Let us gather up the fragments of information here afforded us and see wherein they differ from the Procopian narrative.

1. As to *Castinus*. He is a person as to whom a real historian of the time would evidently have had much to say. After the death of Constantius he is apparently the chief military counsellor at the Court of Ravenna, succeeding to the same position which Stilicho and Constantius had held before him. He thwarts and represses the brave and aspiring Bonifacius, and will not give him his proper place in the expedition which he prepares against the Vandals of Spain (422). He throws away a victory by his bad generalship, flies to Tarragona and apparently returns to Ravenna just in time to take part in the events of 423, when on the death of Honorius he puts the notary Joannes upon the throne. In 424 he receives the honour of a Consulship, and we may perhaps conjecture that he commands the troops which are sent into Africa to wrest that province from Bonifacius who has zealously espoused the cause of Placidia. Of his operations in Africa we hear nothing, but he seems to be absent from the scene when Ardaburius and Aspar conduct their campaign against Ravenna. He falls with the fall of his Imperial puppet, is driven into exile and disappears from history.

All this supplements, but does not contradict, the information given by Procopius.

2. *Felix*, Master of the Soldiery from 426-429, and Patrician 429-430. He too is a great official of whom we should know nothing but for the annalists, and he is one against whom, on account of his violent and sanguinary interference in ecclesiastical affairs, Prosper has a strong feeling of antagonism. He is generally suspected of having caused the murder of Patroclus, Bishop of Arles, and of the saintly deacon Titus who was at the very time of his murder engaged in relieving the distress of the proletarians of Rome. He is higher in nominal rank than Aetius, for when Felix gets a step in promotion Aetius takes the place which he had vacated: and in fact we may probably consider him as chief adviser, and what we should call Prime Minister of Placidia during the first five years of her reign.

NOTE L. But Aetius though nominally second in command is evidently the more powerful character: possibly his mysterious barbarian connections give to his action a stringency which makes it almost equivalent to a command. At any rate when Felix, his wife, and the family chaplain are proved, or suspected to be conspiring against him, Aetius appears to have no difficulty in procuring the execution of all three.

The important point for our present purpose is that Prosper expressly tells us that it was at the will ('*arbitrium*') of *Felix* that war was in 427 declared against Count Bonifacius. Professor Freeman dwells with just emphasis on this entry, so unlike what we should have expected from 'the Procopian legend,' and suggests that Aetius had really nothing to do at this time with the disgrace of Bonifacius, but that his name has been introduced here by Procopius owing to a confusion between the events of 427 and 432, at the latter of which dates there was undoubted enmity between Aetius and Bonifacius. On the other hand, if Aetius was the master-spirit and Felix the nominal head of Placidia's *consistorium* (which I suspect to have been the case) the intrigue against Bonifacius might justly be attributed to either (just as we might say that the disgrace of Marlborough was the work either of Harley or of St. John): and in this way both Prosper and Procopius may possibly be right.

3. *Bonifacius*, as we learn from the interesting and beautiful letter addressed to him by St. Augustine<sup>1</sup>, had once, when only Tribune, done good service against the barbarian (probably Moorish) invaders of Africa, though he had only a small band of *foederati* at his disposal. This may have been after 422 when in 'Africam invasit,' but is much more likely to have been before. He seems to have been sincerely loyal to Placidia<sup>2</sup>, and the diversion which he effected in her favour was an important factor in Valentinian's restoration. After the death of his first wife (we know not the date of this event) he was thinking of retiring from public life and devoting himself to 'sacred leisure,' and only the thought of the duty which he owed to the State and the desire to protect the Churches of Christ from the

<sup>1</sup> Letter 220, translated at full length in the first edition of this book.

<sup>2</sup> This is emphatically asserted by Olympiodorus (Fr. 40): *Καὶ μόνος αὐτῇ (sc. Πλακιδίᾳ) Βονηφάτιος τὰ πιστὰ φυλάτταν, ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀφρικῆς ἧς ἦρχε. Καὶ χρήματα ὡς ἐδύνατο ἐπέμπε. Καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἄλλην αὐτὸς ἐσπενδεθεραπεῖαν· ὕστερον δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν τῆς βασιλείας ἀνάληψιν ἅπαντα συνεβάλετο.*

molestations of the barbarians retained him in office. 'Thou the while' says Augustine in the above-mentioned letter 'wast to seek from this world nothing but what was needed for the mere support of life for thee and thine, being girt with the belt of chastest continence, and, under the armour of a Roman soldier, being yet more safely, yet more strongly fortified by the panoply of God.'

'While I believed, and rejoiced to believe, that thou wast still firm in this purpose, thou madest a voyage, thou marriedst a [second] wife. The voyage was a part of that obedience which, according to the Apostle, is owing to the higher powers. But the wife thou wouldest not have married unless thou hadst been conquered by concupiscence, and therefore broken thy vow of chastity.' And this second wife was a heretic and Bonifacius' own daughter had been baptized by heretical priests. As to this visit across the seas, we really know nothing. Baronius conjectures a visit to the Vandal king at the command of Placidia, and a marriage with one of his kindred: but this is mere guess-work. A visit to Ravenna to take part in the rejoicings at the accession of Valentinian III, and to receive the thanks of Placidia, seems to me much more probable.

Augustine goes on to remonstrate with Bonifacius on the rapine already perpetrated, and the further rapine which he feared would be perpetrated by his followers, 'that multitude of armed men, loving the world with fierce lust, whose desires thou wilt have to flatter, whose ferocity thou wilt have to fear.' 'But what can I say as to the ravage of Africa, which the African barbarians are carrying on unresisted by any man, while thou art so engrossed by thy own schemes of self-defence that thou art not taking any measures for averting so great a calamity.'

Professor Freeman points out that this passage has nothing to do with the Vandal invasion, but relates to the outrages committed by the 'African barbarians,' those wild Mauritians whose guerilla warfare Bonifacius had withstood long ago when only a Tribune with his *foederati*. In this he is clearly right, but I hesitate to follow him in his conclusion that 'Bonifacius, as his saintly friend witnesses, had grossly neglected his duty and he was called on to account for it.' All Augustine's reproofs seem to me consistent with the theory that Bonifacius, though he had declined from his previous high standard of religion,

NOTE L. and perhaps of morality, in his private life, had dealt faithfully and loyally by Placidia, until by the intrigues of her counsellors he was compelled to busy himself in 'schemes of self-defence.'

The story of the Imperial campaign against Bonifacius is obscure and uninteresting. Three generals in joint command, with the strange names Mavortius, Galbio, and Sinox, are sent against him. Sinox betrays his two colleagues to Bonifacius, then shows himself a double-dyed traitor, and is himself put to death by Bonifacius. Count Sigisvult, apparently a Gothic captain of *foederati*, receives the chief command of the expedition, but we hear absolutely nothing of the war which may have followed between him and Bonifacius: only, at this very time, perhaps even before Sigisvult has arrived, we hear of the coming of the Vandals.

As to this, the central event of the whole history, Professor Freeman shows how slight is the support given by Prosper to the story of Procopius. 'The sea,' we are told, 'was made a thoroughfare to the nations which were ignorant of the management of ships, their aid being invoked by the combatants.' We can just discern that this is meant as a description of the passage of the Vandals into Africa. But who made that passage possible? 'The combatants' [*concertantes*]. That is a very curious way of describing Bonifacius who, both in the preceding sentence and in the following clause, is mentioned by name. Can we suppose that Placidia's generals were mad enough to invoke Vandal aid against the rebel governor? That seems improbable to the last degree. I do not profess to be able to explain this strange entry of Prosper's, which does not indeed contradict the narrative of Procopius, but shoots across it with a strange and perplexing light. I would only suggest: (1) that it is possible that the double traitor Sinox, when he found himself falling, may have opened negotiations with the Vandal hosts who were mustering round Calpe, and that these negotiations may have gone on side by side with those of Bonifacius; and, (2) that Prosper, who is evidently an admirer, we might almost say a partisan of Bonifacius, possibly uses this vague word '*concertantes*' in order to veil as much as possible his hero's share in the fatal invitation. It must not be forgotten that even Prosper in his entry for the year 422, where he first brings Bonifacius on the scene, remarks that his government of Africa was the cause



of great disasters to the State [*idque reipublicae multorum laborum initium fuit*]. NOTE L.

As to the rest of Bonifacius' African career there is practically no difference of opinion. I therefore pass on to the closing scene of his life, which we may consider in connection with his rival.

4. *Aetius*, whatever may have been the former relations between them, is undoubtedly in 432 the one great antagonist of Bonifacius. Felix has been for two years in his bloody grave with his wife and their favourite deacon beside him: and there is no one at the Imperial Court to rival the might of Aetius. But at this time (for what reason we know not, but the Procopian narrative would furnish a motive) Placidia ventures to summon her old champion Bonifacius to her side and he comes, in the curious phrase of Prosper '*ab Africâ ad Italiam per Urbem*,' having received from the Augusta the dignity of *Magister Militum*, of which Aetius had been presumably deprived. Aetius meets him in arms: and here Professor Freeman usefully reminds us that it was a regular pitched battle that followed—a drama of real Civil War though in one act only—and that it was fought, according to one trustworthy witness<sup>1</sup>, five miles from Rimini. Professor Freeman justly derides the notion that the fight was in the nature of a duel, something like the feudal 'wager of battle' in order to decide between the two rivals, and that the great place of Master of the Soldiery was meant to be the prize of victory. For all this there is no authority, and the thoughts here hinted at all belong to a later age. But undoubtedly Marcellinus does speak of a single hand-to-hand encounter between the two chiefs, nor does there seem any difficulty in combining this with the words of the other chroniclers which describe the movements of armies. There was a battle in which the army of Placidia, commanded by Bonifacius, got the victory: but in that battle there was a single combat in which he was mortally wounded by his opponent's longer spear. He died, not on the field of battle, but either 'a few days' or 'in the third month' after, his wound having possibly gangrened. If we like to believe Marcellinus he gave to the weeping wife, who was about to become a widow, the advice not to remarry unless she could do so with Aetius.

<sup>1</sup> Prosperi Codex Havniensis.



NOTE L. Aetius himself, though Consul for the year, has entirely fallen from power. He seeks to live in retirement on his own land, is hunted out by some private enemy whose hostility he had doubtless provoked in the years of his supremacy, flees to Rome, thence to Dalmatia, thence to the plains of the middle Danube, and after dwelling for some time (we know not how long) in the homes of the Huns is at length restored to the favour of Placidia by the good offices of these squalid allies, whom he was one day so gloriously to withstand.

In reviewing the whole question I would point out two facts which seem to me of some importance:—

(1) that Procopius, who accompanied Belisarius on his great expedition into Africa (533), expressly says that he got his information as to the passage of Gaiseric into that province from the Vandals themselves<sup>1</sup>. He may therefore be fairly supposed to have heard from the lips of the grandsons of the invaders so important and so memorable a fact as the name of the rebel governor by whom they were invited into Africa.

(2) Joannes Antiochenus<sup>2</sup> tells briefly the same story as Procopius with reference to the intrigues of Aetius against Bonifacius, but he does not tell it in the same words. Now Joannes, though a comparatively late author (he probably lived in the seventh century) and though he certainly used Procopius freely in his compilation, had also some good contemporary authorities before him, especially Priscus, and there seems some probability, though I would not state it more strongly than this, that he may have found the story in one of these as well as in Procopius.

Upon the whole it seems to me that 'the Procopian legend' has still a reasonable claim to be accepted as history. Professor Freeman's battering-ram has undoubtedly made some serious breaches in the walls, but I do not think the garrison are yet reduced to the necessity of surrendering at discretion.

<sup>1</sup> Ταῦτα μὲν δὴ οὕτω πρὸς Βανδύλων ἀκήκοα (De Bello Vand. i. 3).

<sup>2</sup> Fr. 196 (Müller, iv. 613).

## NOTE M. BISHOPS AND CHURCHES OF RAVENNA.

The history of the Empire at the period which we have now NOTE M. reached is so closely bound up with that of Ravenna, and ecclesiastical events occupy so prominent a place in the annals of that city that it seems necessary to devote a few pages to the *Liber Pontificalis* of Agnellus, our chief authority for this portion of history. It is undoubtedly a great disadvantage to have to derive our information from a monkish Chronicler who lived four centuries after the time for which we need his guidance. The mosaics, as has been hinted in the text, kept alive the remembrance of the names and the personal appearance of many of his saintly heroes: but the myth-making faculty was active during that morning of the Middle Ages, and many of the quaint legends recorded in the pages of Agnellus may have derived their colour from the Carolingian period rather than the Theodosian. Still with all its deficiencies and all its yet greater redundancies the *Liber Pontificalis* is a most valuable memorial of what men were thinking and saying in the city by the Ronco in the days of the last Theodosians, of Theodoric and of the Exarch of Ravenna.

The book of Agnellus, which has been preserved from oblivion practically by only one MS. of the fifteenth century, has been admirably edited by Dr. Holder-Egger for the 'Monumenta Germaniae Historica,' and this editor has not only prefixed to his work a careful and exhaustive preface as to the life of Agnellus, but has also succeeded in bringing order and harmony into the apparently hopeless chaos of his chronology. I gladly substitute Holder-Egger's well-substantiated conclusions for the conjectures on the same subject, which were somewhat too rashly expressed by me in the first edition of this work.

Agnellus was born about the year 805, of a noble and wealthy

NOTE M. family at Ravenna. He bore also the name of Andreas which he derived from his grandfather, through whom he was descended from a certain Johannicis, poet and secretary of state, who took a leading part in an unsuccessful rebellion of Ravenna against the tyrant Justinian II (709). Agnellus himself was trained as a priest in the Cathedral Church of Ravenna, and when quite a young man was made abbot of two monasteries in that city, a piece of promotion which brought him not only dignity but wealth. One of these monasteries was, however, afterwards taken away (he says without any just cause) by the Bishop of Ravenna (who had formerly been his bosom-friend), but was eventually restored to him.

Agnellus was of short stature but comely face. He had a great flow of words and sang the holy offices more sweetly than a nightingale. He seems to have been a clever nimble-minded man, with some skill in decoration (he himself says that he was 'artificiorum omnium ingeniis plenus') and some knowledge of Greek as well as Latin literature; altogether a man of what seemed extraordinary learning and culture in a very barbarous age. Being apparently the youthful genius of his native city, he was importuned by the other Presbyters of Ravenna to rescue from oblivion the Bishops, nearly fifty in number, who in the course of eight centuries had presided over that important See. He undertook the work, but found the labour so severe that his health suffered therefrom, and he sometimes threw down the pen, doubtful whether he should ever be able to resume it. But the pressure of his colleagues overcame his reluctance, real or feigned. If he found enough material in the memories of the oldest inhabitants, he wrote a long life of an eminent saint; if he found no such material he invented it; if his health was not adequate to the labour of invention, he treated his brethren instead to a disquisition on an obscure text of Scripture, which certainly became obscure when he had handled it sufficiently.

There is a mixture of the pathetic and the ludicrous in the appeals which he sometimes makes to his too persistent friends. Take for instance his life of St. Aurelian, Bishop of Ravenna, from 520 to 521. 'He was an eminent man, young in years, old in wisdom, mild towards the people, courteous towards his flock. . . . But, my dearly beloved, that you may know what heavy burdens you have imposed upon my neck, I have not been able

to learn any facts about this man except that he acquired NOTE M.  
certain property for the cathedral in the territory of Comacchio  
. . . and that a monastery was built in his time. But on account  
of your prayer, that this man's history may not appear too short,  
I will, with Divine help, relate boldly what my human intellect  
is quite unable to declare. . . .

‘Now you wish that I should proceed. But I am very sick  
and weak in body, and can do nothing to-day. To-morrow,  
with the Creator's help, I will begin.

[A day intervenes.]

‘Oh! do not press me as you did yesterday. Your eloquence  
has urged me quite enough. Think of the words of Solomon,  
“He who presseth for words too vehemently squeezeth out  
blood.”

‘Remember that this wisdom of mine is not my own but the  
gift of the Almighty. Ah, wretched me, who am daily pressed  
with such questions! Do not thus treat me. If you want to  
have this *Liber Pontificalis* finished quickly and deposited in  
your hands, consider your own frailty, and then mine also.  
To-day I number six lustres (thirty years) besides two years and  
six months, since I quitted my mother's womb. Never have  
I suffered such tortures, never have I been so constrained as  
I was by you yesterday. But if it is your pleasure to drag me  
hither and thither by the ears, to tie my hands behind my back,  
to lay your strokes upon my breast and my shoulders, I will  
consent. Do what you will and then leave me alone, and keep  
what I have already written concerning the Pontiffs of Ravenna:  
you will hear nothing more from me. I will finish this life of  
Aurelian, and then be silent ever after<sup>1</sup>. . . .

‘Remember what I say: I wish you to know that if I leave  
off this *Liber Pontificalis* on account of your persecution, a time  
will come when you will read my half-finished book and will  
remember with a groan what I am now saying to you. I desire  
with the help of Almighty God to bring this labour of mine to  
its proper ending: you, by your too great haste, in fact wish me  
to leave off. I will not do it. But as I consider that I am your  
debtor bound to answer that question about the rivers of Etham  
I will now do it.

<sup>1</sup> This threat was not fulfilled. His second book is equal in length to the first,  
which he is here completing.



NOTE M. 'The Psalmist says, "Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood, thou driedst up the river of Etham." Now let us see why he dried up the river of Etham.' And then he proceeds at great length to discuss this question, explaining that Etham is another name for the Devil.

The language in which the *Liber Pontificalis* is written is supposed to be Latin. False concords and barbarisms abound, but the style is fluent and declamatory, formed perhaps on the models of Jerome and Augustine. Every now and then we come upon a quotation (generally in hexameters) from an earlier age, especially from Virgil, and these quoted passages are generally correct enough in metre and in Latinity. The effect produced by their presence here is like that of the classical capitals in the dim aisles and beneath the ecclesiastical mosaics of Sant' Apollinare in Classe.

Still with all his barbarisms there is much that is interesting and characteristic in the work of this Carolingian scribe. The stories of the wool-comber Bishop, Severus, of the hermit who came out of the wilderness accompanied by two tame lions to gaze upon the authentic likeness of the Lord in the Church of St. Peter at Classis, of Bishop John with his Angel Acolyte, and of Peter of the Golden Speech whom the Pope ordained in obedience to a vision, the legend of the Arm of the Mighty One which was figured upon a wall, and which being invoked as witness of a bond compelled a defaulting debtor to come all the way from Constantinople to Ravenna in order to repay his debt:—these and many more histories of the same kind bear witness to a mythological faculty, as child-like and sometimes almost as graceful as the similar faculty in earliest Greece.

As to the materials used by Agnellus, they appear to have been chiefly the history of the Lombards by Paulus, and the very valuable but now almost entirely lost Chronicle of Maximian, Bishop of Ravenna (546–556, or 557). No doubt he also used extensively oral tradition, which was by this time sufficiently vague and inaccurate as to all events preceding the Lombard Conquest. But one great source was certainly the mosaics, still perfect and abundant in his day, preserving the very colours of the faces of the Bishops and thus enabling him (as has been already said) to prefix to each life a little word-portrait of the saint who was to be commemorated. It is not surprising that in a history



thus composed, the order of the names should be less trustworthy NOTE M. than the names themselves. Moreover, we are told of a certain chasuble at Classis, that served the purpose of a diptych in recording the names of deceased Bishops, which were embroidered on the silk lining and each enclosed in a circle. In one perpendicular line was one series, a line from shoulder to shoulder contained another, round the loins a third series, below the arm-hole a fourth, and so on. It is easy to see how mistakes as to arrangement might arise from the use of such a document as this.

Agnellus gives with great minuteness the day of the death of his episcopal heroes, but generally omits to mention the year. The memory of the day was no doubt preserved by religious observances in their honour. All the lives end with the words 'He occupied the see of Ravenna—years,—months, and—days:' but only in two cases throughout the first part is the number of the years, months, and days filled in. He also gives us very minute and circumstantial information as to the burial-places of his Bishops; and the number of churches, especially at Classis, thus recorded, so many of which have perished without memorial, helps us to understand more vividly all that the three towns once were and how small a part of their art treasures—rich as that residue seems—has been preserved to us.

It will be understood from what has gone before that the Chronology of Agnellus is in a very chaotic state. But some sort of order, as I have said, has at last been brought into the chaos by the latest German editor, and as a knowledge of this chronology is almost indispensable to an intelligent study of the monuments of Ravenna, I will here set down the chief results at which he has arrived, down to the time of the Lombard invasion. As to the first eleven Bishops, we have no means of checking Agnellus' information, and must therefore repeat the names as he gives them. They are—

1. *St. Apollinaris*, 'the Apostle of Ravenna.'
2. *St. Aderitus*, 'a holy man, much honoured by Apollinaris.'
3. *St. Eleucadius*, 'a great philosopher who composed books, both on the Old and New Testament, and on the Incarnation and Passion of Christ.'
4. *St. Martiannus*, 'a man of noble birth, ordained deacon by Apollinaris.'

NOTE M. 5. *St. Calocerus*, 'a man of advanced age, who wrought many wonderful signs and rescued many souls from the power of the demons.'

6. *St. Proculus*, 'who expressed himself with honeyed sweetness in his sermons to the people, and handed as it were cups of milk to their thirsting souls. The crown of white hairs was on his head when he ended his episcopate with his life.'

7. *St. Probus*, 'a meek and pious man, bright in aspect, fervent in work.'

8. *St. Dathus*, 'a religious and very pious man, and a frequent preacher to the people.'

9. *St. Liberius*, 'a great man, a never-failing fountain of charity, who brought much honour to the Church.'

10. *St. Agapetus*, 'whose name in the Latin tongue signifies *Charitosus*. He daily celebrated love-feasts ('Αγάπαι) with strangers and assiduously bestowed gifts on the poor.'

11. *St. Marcellinus*, 'a just man and honoured for his prayers. After a long space of years he ended his life and his pontificate: and his body gave out such sweet odours that most precious myrrh, burnt as incense, seemed to fill the nostrils of those who buried him.'

12. *St. Severus*, the wool-comber Bishop whose story has been told in the text. His name occurs among the prelates who signed the decrees of the council of Sardica in 344. Notwithstanding a story which connects his death with that of Genimianus, Bishop of Modena (who was still living in 390), it seems probable that Severus was an old man when he was present at Sardica, and that his pontificate ended about the middle of the century.

13. *St. Liberius II*, 'an eminent man, a father of the orphans and liberal in his alms.'

14. *St. Probus II*, 'Anointed with Divine grace, and beautiful to look upon, decrepit with age, heavy in body, mirthful in countenance, imbued with heavenly grace, strengthened by God, unto whom he sought perpetually.'

15. *St. Florentius*, 'a righteous man, father of the poor and guide of the widows.'

16. *St. Liberius III*, 'a saintly man, goodly in form, clear of mind, with a milk-like flow of eloquence, a destroyer of idols, and one who had the joy of seeing the Christians in his time

visibly increase and the pagans diminish.' He is said to have NOTE M.  
been a contemporary and an eye-witness of the assassination of  
the Emperor Valentinian II, who was really slain not at  
Ravenna but at Vienne, and all the details are quite incorrectly  
given.

17. *St. Ursus*, 'a most chaste and holy man, who had an earnest and noble countenance and was moderately bald. He first began to construct a temple to God, so that the Christians previously scattered about in huts should be collected into one sheepfold.'

Without taking this language about the huts literally, we may accept the fact that *St. Ursus* was the first to build a really metropolitan church for Ravenna. At this day the *Duomo* (unfortunately rebuilt in the eighteenth century) bears the name of *St. Orso*. The original building with its five naves, separated by four rows of columns, fifty-six in number and all taken from the temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, must have been a goodly sight.

Another name for this '*Ecclesia Ursiana*' was the *Anastasis* (Resurrection). The wall on the women's side of the church was decorated with a figure of *St. Anastasia*. High over all rose a dome (*testudo*) 'with various coloured tiles representing different figures.'

The Pontiff *Ursus* lived to see his work completed, and after an episcopate of twenty-six years 'he laid him down to die on the 13th of April, on the anniversary of Christ's resurrection, and was appropriately buried in his own cathedral of the *Anastasis*.'

The pontificate of *Ursus* is assigned by *Dr. Holder-Egger* (though with some hesitation) to the years between 370 and 396: the dedication of the cathedral to 385.

[18. *St. Peter I*, 'a most holy man of tall stature, attenuated frame, emaciated countenance and wearing a bushy beard. He together with all his predecessors from the time of *St. Apollinaris* had been of Syrian extraction' (a strange and inexplicable tradition this, which seems to be alluded to in *Sidonius*' letter about Ravenna, quoted in the preceding chapter<sup>1</sup>). This Bishop *Peter* is rejected both by *Holder-Egger* and by *Rubeus* the historian of Ravenna, and is believed to owe his existence

<sup>1</sup> See p. 861.

NOTE M. to some confusion as to the date of Peter Chrysologus. We accordingly give the number eighteen to his successor.]

18. *St. John* the Angel-Seer, one of the two great bishops of Ravenna contemporary with Placidia. He appears to have been elected about 418, and to have died at some time between 432 and 440, that being the period during which Pope Sixtus III ruled the Church of Rome. Holder-Egger appears inclined to put his death about 439. As there is thus an unfilled interval between the death of Ursus and the election of John, one is inclined to doubt whether Holder-Egger has not been too hasty in his entire rejection of 'Peter I.'

'John was a man right venerable for his virtue, a nourisher of the poor, a lover of modesty and chastity, one at whose prayer the angelic hosts descended upon earth: of moderate stature and thin face, lean with fasting, a great alms-giver to the poor.

'In his time the Church of *St. Laurentius*<sup>1</sup> the Martyr, situated in Caesarea, built by Lauricius, was completed. We can still behold from the magnitude of the building what great diligence must have been used in its construction. I think I had better not be silent as to the story which I have heard told concerning the erection of this Church.

'The Emperor Honorius gave his chamberlain Lauricius a sum of money wherewith he was to build him a palace in Caesarea. Having received the money he came to that place and there built [not a palace, but] a Basilica to the Blessed Martyr. Having entirely finished his work he returned to his master, whom he found sitting on his throne in imperial vestments, and who asked him, with much excitement, whether the royal palace which he had ordered him to build were yet completed. (For malevolent men, full of envy and inbred sin, had assailed the ears of the Emperor with their temptations, telling him that the blessed Lauricius was building not an imperial mansion but a church.) The chamberlain answering said, that he had built a great and noble palace, that it had porches and lofty towers, and couches<sup>2</sup> here and there affixed to the very walls of the house.

'So the wrath of the Emperor was quieted, and when, after

<sup>1</sup> No remains apparently of this church.

<sup>2</sup> Alluding possibly to seats for the congregation.



a long march, he beheld the building rising in air he was filled with complacency<sup>1</sup>. But when they had actually entered the holy building, Lauricius darted away and took refuge behind the altar. Honorius, after giving orders for his arrest, prostrated himself on the floor of the Church. Thereupon a gem of great value fell out of his crown, and became fastened in the stones of the pavement. The Emperor himself passed into an ecstasy, and when he raised his head and the mist had passed away from his eyes he saw behind the altar of St. Laurentius (which the aforesaid Pope John had consecrated) Lauricius standing and Laurentius, Christ's athlete, laying his hand upon Lauricius' shoulder. Then the Emperor laid aside all his wrath, and declaring that Lauricius was a more righteous man than himself he venerated him as a father, and ordered all things in the palace according to his advice. Lauricius lived in the light of this world ninety-six years, and died in a good old age in the time of the same Emperor<sup>2</sup>, who with his soldiers mourning followed the bier.'

NOTE M.

The next story of Emperor and Bishop is one which, whether true or false, was an important factor in the after-history of Ravenna.

'The Emperor Valentinian III,' says Agnellus, 'was so greatly moved by the preaching of the holy man, that he took off his imperial crown in his presence, and with lowly words and reverent gesture, begged his blessing. Having received it he departed with glad countenance, and not many days after he bestowed upon him fourteen cities with their churches, to be governed by him with arch-priestly power. And these fourteen cities with their bishops are to this day subject to the Church of Ravenna. This bishop first received from the Emperor a *Pallium* of white wool, just such as it is the custom for the Roman Pontiff to wear over the *Duplum*; and he and his successors have used such a vestment down to the present day<sup>3</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> An incidental proof how little as yet the ecclesiastical Basilica had deviated in external appearance from its imperial pattern.

<sup>2</sup> This must be a mistake. The inscription on his tomb, quoted by Agnellus, shows that Lauricius outlived Honorius by at least fifteen years.

<sup>3</sup> As the passage is important, I will transcribe the original:—'Non post multos dies idem Augustus sub consecratione B. Johannis Antistitis xiv Civitates cum suis Ecclesiis largitus est Archieraticâ potestate, et usque in praesentem



NOTE M. The historical student will see at a glance how much importance may be attached to these few sentences. The question of Investitures, and the dependence or independence of the Church of Ravenna from that of Rome are both concerned here. Of course the champions of the Papal prerogative do not admit that the passage has any authority.

Shortly before the death of John, his biographers place that marvellous event which gave him his name of 'the Angel-Seer,' and which is an early instance of those legends of the Holy Grail with which English readers have been rendered familiar through Tennyson's 'Sir Galahad.' 'When the aforesaid Joannes was singing a solemn mass in the Basilica of St. Agatha, and had accomplished all things according to the rite of the holy Pontiffs, after the reading of the Gospel, after the protestation (?), the catechumens who were privileged to see him saw marvellous things. For when the saint was beginning to say the canonical words of prayer and to make the sign of the Cross over the Sacrifice, suddenly an angel from heaven came and stood on the other side of the altar in sight of the Pontiff. And when after finishing the consecration he had received the body of the Lord, the assisting deacon who wished to fulfil his ministry could not see the chalice which he had to hand to him. Suddenly he was moved aside by the angel who offered the holy chalice to the Pontiff in his place. Then all the priests and people began to shake and tremble, beholding the holy chalice, self-moved, inclined to the Pontiff's mouth and again lifted into the air and laid upon the holy altar. A strange thrill passed through the waiting multitude. Some said "The deacon is unworthy," but others affirmed "Not so, but it is a heavenly visitation." And so long did the angel stand by the holy man until all the solemnities of the mass were ended.

'After a short time, having blessed all his sons the citizens of Ravenna, with joyful countenance as one bidden to a feast, John ended his days on the fifth of June. He was buried in the Basilica of St. Agatha, behind the altar in the place where he saw the angel standing, and we see daily his portrait over

*diem xiv Civitates cum Episcopis sub Ravennae Ecclesiâ reductae sunt . . . Iste primus ab Augusto pallium ex candidâ lanâ accepit, ut mos est Romanorum Pontifici super duplo idem induere, quo usus est ipse et successores sui usque in praesentem diem.* Agnelli, *Lib. Pontif. apud Muratori*, ii, 67.

the sedilia, from which it appears that he was a man of slender form, with hair mostly black, but a few white locks interspersed. But his holiness was greater than his years, for the Lord of Heaven looks not so much at men's ages as at their hearts. NOTE M.

‘And now, my brethren, through the favour of God I have fulfilled my promise as far as I was able, and written the life of Joannes Angeloptes. But thy deeds, oh Petrus Chrysologus, who is sufficient to declare? Though my voice were made of adamant and came forth from brazen lungs, and though I had a hundred verses in my *ligarii* (?), even so I could not narrate all thy actions.’

19. *St. Peter Chrysologus* ‘was beautiful of aspect, delightful in form. Before him was no Pontiff like him in wisdom, neither did any such arise after him.’

Undoubtedly Chrysologus was one of the great ecclesiastical figures of the fifth century, a man not unworthy to stand by the side of Chrysostom of Constantinople and Leo of Rome. As far as his date can be ascertained, he seems to have come into the See about 439, and to have died some time before 458. He was a native of Imola, and was, according to the legend recorded by Agnellus, a humble deacon ministering in the cathedral church of that city, when Pope Sixtus III (432–441), obeying an intimation which he had received in a vision from St. Peter and St. Apollinaris, presented him to the clergy of Ravenna, and insisted upon their receiving him as their Bishop instead of the candidate of their chair. But this legend has about it many marks of a late origin, and has probably at the best only a small nucleus of truth.

Of the actual episcopate of Chrysologus there is not much that need here be recorded. He is said to have taken part, by correspondence, in the Council of Chalcedon (451), and to have addressed a severe letter to the heretic Eutyches. ‘After a space of 30 years a claim is barred by mere human laws; why then dost thou after about 500 (?) years presume thus to address thy railing accusations against Christ? But thou oughtest to humble thyself before the holy Roman Pontiff, and diligently to keep his precepts, and think of him as if he were St. Peter the Apostle still present in the flesh, holding the primacy of the Roman See.’

The internal evidence is quite sufficient to show that no such

NOTE M. letter was ever addressed by Ravenna to Chalcedon. One letter however on the subject of the Eutychian heresy, and some homilies, are still extant, which by the consent of scholars appear to be admitted as his genuine compositions. His true memorial however is the lovely chapel of San Pier Crisologo, or Arcivescovado, to which reference is made in the text.

When it was made known to him by a divine intimation that death was approaching, he left the archiepiscopal splendours of Ravenna and repaired to his own ancestral Imola. There, in the Basilica and by the altar of Cassian, once schoolmaster, then martyr, and now patron-saint of Imola, he stood and uttered a long and beautiful prayer to God and address to his people. After which, 'turning to the altar of St. Cassian, he said, "I pray thee, blessed Cassian, intercede for me. I was as it were a home-born servant in thy house, when Cornelius nourished me up in the bosom of thy Church. Returning to thee once more I now give up my body to thee and my soul to Almighty God." With these and other words, hurled forth as from the mouth of a conqueror, while all around were weeping, he gave up his spirit on the third of December. And the grave-diggers laid his sacred body in the spot which he himself pointed out behind the episcopal seat in that Church, and there it remains unto this day.'

Chrysologus was succeeded by

20. *St. Neon*, and he by

21. *St. Exuperantius*,

both of whom Agnellus has placed before Joannes Angeloptes but who evidently must be transferred to this place. Little is known of either, except that a letter was addressed to Neon by Pope Leo the Great in the year 458. Apparently the two saints together fill up the interval from about 455 to 477.

To the modern traveller Neon's chief claim for remembrance consists in his decoration of the Baptistry, that little octagonal building which, like so many of its kind in North Italy, stands a little apart from the Duomo (Ecclesia Ursiana) to which it belongs. A large cistern—evidently used for the full immersion of the neophyte—stands in the centre of the building. On the dome above, the vivid mosaics depict the baptism of Jesus by John. Jordan, in aspect like a classical river-god, contemplates the great event, while all around the lower part of the dome

stand the stately figures of the Apostles. Some hexameters, NOTE M. still inscribed on the walls in the time of Agnellus, attributed 'the glory of this renovation to the magnanimous Neon, chief of the priests, who, with beautifying reverence, ordered all things anew.'

22. *St. John II* ruled the See from 477 to 494. Here at last we get two certain dates from the inscription on his tomb, and the recovery of this name and these dates enables us to correct an omission of Agnellus and to understand the cause of the wild errors which he has committed in his chronology. For it is now clear that in his life of John the Angel-seer he has run two bishops into one, and has calmly blended transactions reaching over a period of some sixty or seventy years, the death of Honorius, the invasion of Attila, the war between Odovacar and Theodoric, in his life of a bishop who according to his own account ruled his See for 16 years, 10 months, and 18 days <sup>1</sup>.

It was this John II who negotiated the peace, the short-lived peace between Odovacar and Theodoric which terminated the long siege of Ravenna (493) <sup>2</sup>.

23. *St. Peter II* (or *III*), 494-520(?). By a similar confusion Agnellus has omitted to mention this prelate, and has attributed one of his buildings to St. Peter Chrysologus. That this Peter was the successor of John II is made almost certain by the fact that his name occurs on the roll of the bishops who attended the synods in Rome between 501 and 504, called in connection with the schism between Symmachus and Laurentius. We hear of Peter also in 519, as failing to control the excesses of the anti-Jewish rabble at Ravenna <sup>3</sup>. We may therefore at least say, that he was bishop for the first two decades of the sixth century.

24. *St. Aurelian*, who occupied the See for little more than a year, is the Bishop whose biography, with its quaint confession of the biographer's ignorance of his subject, has been already quoted <sup>4</sup>. It is interesting to note that a fragment of his will still exists, written on papyrus. We learn from it that the will

<sup>1</sup> This computation, taken from the epitaph above mentioned, evidently belongs to the second John, not the first.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. iii. p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> Anon. Valesii, 82, 83. See vol. iii. 298, 299.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 900.



NOTE M. was (as we should say) 'proved' before the magistrates of Ravenna, on the 3rd June, 521<sup>1</sup>.

25. *St. Ecclesius* (circa 521-532) 'a holy vessel, of moderate stature. He had a head covered with bushy hair, and shaggy eyebrows; he was moderately white-haired and beautiful to look upon. In his time, the temple of the blessed martyr Vitalis was dedicated by Julianus the Treasurer along with the bishop himself.' A dispute arose between this Bishop and some of his clergy who had begun to attend the sports of the amphitheatre, and in other ways had broken the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline. The dispute was referred to Pope Felix III, whose judgment signed by Ecclesius and the clergy of both the opposing parties, still exists, an interesting and valuable document.

The portrait of Ecclesius in mosaic, corresponding pretty accurately to the above description, is introduced in the apse of the church of St. Vitale.

Together with Pope John, and several other prelates and officials of high rank, Ecclesius was sent by Theodoric on a strange and ill-judged embassy to the Emperor Justin I, to obtain a mitigation of the persecution of the Arians. Whether he shared the imprisonment which was the punishment inflicted on the Pope on his return from his unsuccessful mission we are not informed<sup>2</sup>.

26. *St. Ursicinus* (circa 532-536), 'a lowly man, having a ruddy face and large eyes, tall in stature, slender in figure, holy and a worker of holiness. This holy man ordered that the church of St. Apollinaris [in Classe] should be founded and completed by Julian the Treasurer. In all the regions of Italy there is no church like to this, with precious stones which glow by night as well as by day.'

27. *St. Victor* (circa 537-544), 'a man of beautiful face and brisk countenance. He made a *ciborium* of silver over the altar in the church of St. Ursus [the cathedral], a marvellous work. Some say that he did this jointly with the common people, and others that in the time of Justinian I, the orthodox Emperor suggested that he should undertake this work, and he in turn asked the Emperor for help, whereupon Justinian, moved by compassion, granted the whole revenue of Italy in that year to

<sup>1</sup> Marini Pap. dipl. 112 (quoted by Holder-Egger).

<sup>2</sup> Anon. Valesii, § 90. Compare vol. iii. p. 512, &c.



the blessed Victor [for the purpose of the ciborium]. And NOTE M. having received it Victor constructed the work which ye now see, and which when the ancient work is removed is of the full weight of 120 pounds of silver.'

There are signs of a vacancy of the See (well accounted for by the troubles of the times) between the death of St. Victor and the election of

28. *St. Maximian* (546-556, or 557). 'He was tall in stature,' says Agnellus, 'of slender body, thin in the face, with bald head, with blue-grey eyes, and adorned with all grace.'

After the lapse of thirteen centuries we can still look upon the face of this noteworthy prelate, theologian, architect and historian, even as it was represented to the men of his own generation, on the walls of the church of St. Vitale. There is seen the broad, sleek face of Justinian, who by an artistic fiction is represented as assisting at the consecration of the Church. The diadem, the purple robe, the jewelled sandals, all the glory of an Emperor of Rome in the sixth century are represented in the freshly-glowing mosaic. Three great officers of state stand close beside him: his body-guard with spear and shield stand ready for his defence. On the left of the Emperor are three ecclesiastics; at their head Bishop Maximian wearing his *Pallium* and holding a jewelled cross in his right hand. His great, dome-like forehead is bald, but the few hairs still left on either side of it have not lost their blackness. The face is distinguished from those of the commonplace courtiers and churchmen who surround him, by something of the dignity of study and of thought. It is eminently fitting that this bishop should be represented standing side by side with the Emperor of the East in the Church at Ravenna, for it was to Imperial favour that he owed his great place in the city by the Ronco. He was a mere deacon in the church of Pola, the Istrian city, but when after the death of Victor, a deputation of priests from Ravenna arrived in Constantinople urging their various claims and pressing Justinian to bestow the coveted *Pallium* on one or other of them, the Emperor waived them all aside and ordered Vigilius the Roman Pontiff, who was at that time a refugee in his dominions, to consecrate the deacon Maximian, a man in the 49th year of his age, at Patras in Achaia, and sent him with the episcopal *Pallium* to Ravenna.

NOTE M. The pride of the men of Ravenna was wounded by this intrusion of an Istrian stranger into their See. Among other ill-natured stories which were circulated to account for the extraordinary favour shown him by Justinian, it was said that when digging in a field near Pola, he had discovered a great vessel filled with gold and precious ornaments. At once he ordered an ox to be slain and filled its belly with some of the treasure. Then he ordered his shoemaker to make a pair of stout jack-boots and these too he filled with golden pieces. The balance that was left over after these appropriations he took with him to Constantinople and handed it over to the Emperor<sup>1</sup>. Great was Justinian's need of money at this time for his costly wars, and even while thanking the generous finder he could not refrain from asking if there were any more treasure behind. 'I swear to thee, oh Emperor,' said the deacon, 'by the salvation of thy soul that there was nothing more in the vessel except what I have spent on the belly and on shoe-leather.' Justinian, thinking that he had all the treasure except what had been expended on absolute necessities for the journey, considered within himself what reward he could give for such generous loyalty; and in this way (said popular rumour) Maximian obtained the bishopric of Ravenna.

If he had indeed by devious ways climbed up to that high dignity, when he had obtained it he did not bear himself therein unworthily. The citizens at first closed their gates against him, and he remained for some time in a palace outside the walls which had been built by an Arian bishop in the time of Theodoric. The chief men of his party chafed over the delay and were for sending to Constantinople to invoke the intervention of the Emperor. But Maximian steadfastly refused to appeal to the secular arm. 'He was a shepherd,' he said, 'and he would not slaughter his flock.' He invited first one and then another of the hostile party to dine with him, and after eating and drinking he gave them some of the treasures which, according to the story, had once been hidden in the boots or in the ox's belly. They all went back charmed with their entertainer,

<sup>1</sup> Had the treasure been found 'in Caesaris loco,' in some place belonging to the Emperor? In that case the Emperor was entitled as of right to one half of the find (*Iust. ii. 1. 39*). Or are we to consider it as a free-will offering on the part of Maximian?

praised his wisdom and prudence, and lamented the sad estate of NOTE M.  
the Church of Ravenna which was going limping on her way without a bishop. Before long the gates were opened: and the citizens went forth with crosses and banners to welcome their pastor. They kissed his feet, and they led him with acclamation through the flower-crowned streets to the Basilica of Ursus and the bishop's-house<sup>1</sup> of the sainted Chrysologus.

In the ten years of Maximian's episcopate he was a great builder of churches. He built the beautiful church of St. Mary, in his native city of Pola, and in Ravenna the church of St. Andrew which he intended to enrich with the body of the Apostle: but as Justinian—so says the legend—insisted on detaining the precious relic at Constantinople in order that the sister-cities of Old and New Rome might each possess the body of one of the brothers, Simon and Andrew, Maximian had to content himself with the hair of the Apostle's beard, which he carried to Ravenna and placed under the high altar of his new church. To Maximian also, as we have seen, fell the honour of completing and dedicating in 547 the church of St. Vitale, and in 549 that of St. Apollinare in Classe. He contributed many precious vessels to the sacristy of the cathedral, and caused the seventy-two books which were used in the service of the church to be beautifully copied, himself diligently collating copy and original to guard against error.

But what especially interests us in this prelate and justifies us in lingering somewhat over his name is that he was evidently one of the chief historians, we might perhaps say the only Italian historian of the sixth century. 'After the blessed Jerome and Orosius and other historiographers, he laboured at chronicles, and following in their steps, in divers books traced out his own chronicle of the nobler kind of princes, not only emperors but also kings and prefects<sup>2</sup>.' We have apparently only one short quotation taken expressly from the 'Chronica' of Maximian, but finding as we do a peculiar fullness and richness of detail in some of our authorities whenever they touch on affairs specially interesting to a citizen of Ravenna, we have a right to conjecture that some of them at any rate had this chronicle of Maximian before them when they were writing.

<sup>1</sup> Episcopium.

<sup>2</sup> Agnellus 78.

NOTE M. The precise relation to Maximian of 'Anonymus Cuspiniani,' 'Anonymus Valesii,' and the continuer of Prosper (Codex Havniensis) has been much discussed and is perhaps not yet entirely settled; but that some relation existed between them is placed almost beyond a doubt.

29. *St. Agnellus* (circa 556-570) is the last bishop whom I propose to mention here, as the ecclesiastical history of his successors connects itself intimately with the civil history of the Exarchs of Ravenna. This bishop, according to the description of his much later namesake, 'had a ruddy face, a full figure, thin eyebrows, pink scalp, piercing eyes and a double chin under his beard. He was of middle height, comely in person, perfect in work, but after the loss of his wife, laying aside the belt of military service he gave himself up entirely to God. He was of noble descent, rich in possessions, abounding in flocks and herds and all kinds of wealth. Among the rest of his property he left five silver vessels, ornaments for the table, to his grand-daughter, his daughter's daughter<sup>1</sup>.'

Justinian is said to have handed over to Agnellus and the Church of Ravenna all the possessions of the Goths in the city and suburbs, but probably by this we are to understand only the ecclesiastical possessions of the Arian Gothic community. The episcopate of Agnellus was made chiefly memorable by his 'reconciliation,' that is reconsecration for Catholic worship, of six great Arian churches which had been built in Ravenna and its neighbourhood under the princes of the house of Theodoric. Among these were the Church of St. Maria in Cosmedim, otherwise called the Arian Baptistry, the Church of St. Theodore, and the Church of St. Martin 'in Coelo Aureo,' afterwards known as 'S. Apollinare Dentro.' It was Agnellus who gave to the last named church those two superb mosaics representing the procession of the Martyrs and the Virgins which are now the crowning glory of marvellous Ravenna.

For the convenience of actual visitors to Ravenna (for whose sake chiefly this note is written) I append a tabular statement of the chief ecclesiastical buildings still visible there, with the names of their founders and the approximate dates of their erection.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the reason why these are specially mentioned is because the Church had hoped to become the owner of them.

<i>Church.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Founder.</i>	<i>NOTE M.</i>
Ecclesia Ursiana (Cathedral) and Baptistery.	385	St. Ursus.	
St. John the Evangelist.	425	Galla Placidia.	
St. Agatha.	Early part of 5th century.	Unknown.	
Chapel of St. Peter Chrysologus (at the Arcivescovado).	439-458.	St. Peter Chrysologus.	
St. Peter the Greater (now S. Francesco).	Circa 450-460.	St. Peter Chrysologus and Neon.	
Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (SS. Nazario e Celso).	Circa 450.	Galla Placidia.	
St. Theodore (now Spirito Santo).	Early part of 6th century.	Theodoric.	
Arian Baptistery (now S. Maria in Cosmedim).	"	"	
St. Martin 'in Coelo Aureo' (now S. Apollinare Dentro).	"	"	
St. Vitalis.	Circa 530-547.	St. Ecclesius, Julian the Treasurer, and St. Maximian.	
St. Apollinaris 'in Classe.'	Circa 535-549.	St. Ursicinus, Julian the Treasurer, and St. Maximian.	



## CHAPTER XX.

### SALVIAN ON THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20

---

NEAR the end of the life of Placidia, a book was written in Gaul, and circulated from monastery to monastery, which evidently produced a profound impression on the minds of the generation who first read it, and which remains to this day one of our most valuable sources of information as to the inner life of the dying Empire and the moral character of its foes. This work is the treatise of St. Salvian, Presbyter<sup>1</sup> of Marseilles, concerning the Government of God<sup>2</sup>, in eight books.

Life of St.  
Salvian.

The author was born in Gaul, possibly at Cologne, towards the end of the fourth century. He appears to have spent several years of early manhood at Trier, and to have gone thence to Marseilles, in which city he passed the middle and later portion of his life. He was married, and had a daughter named Auspiciola, after whose birth he and his wife Palladia, according to the not infrequent custom of the times, took the so-called vow of perpetual chastity, and consecrated themselves to the religious life. He was still living, at a good old

<sup>1</sup> He is erroneously called Bishop in the title-page of some editions. There appears to be no doubt that he died a simple Presbyter.

<sup>2</sup> Otherwise 'concerning the Present Judgment [of God].'

age, about the year 480, and was then spoken of by a contemporary ecclesiastic<sup>1</sup> as 'a Presbyter of Mar-  
seilles, well furnished with divine and human learning, and, not to speak invidiously, the master of the holy bishops Salonus and Veranius.' His book '*De Gubernatione Dei*' was probably composed between 440 and 450.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

The enigma which demanded solution from Salvian, as it must have done from all of his contemporaries who looked forth with any intelligence upon the catastrophe of the Roman Empire, was this, 'Why, if this world be ordered by Divine Providence, is the framework of society, which is now no longer Anti-Christian but Christian, going to pieces under the assaults of the barbarians?' Augustine had dealt with one half of this question, but he had treated it merely as a part of Christian polemics. He had contended, in the '*De Civitate Dei*,' that these calamities were *not* the result of Rome's renunciation of Paganism. He had not, except casually and incidentally, sought to investigate what was their true cause. Orosius, while to some extent following his master's lead, had ultimately come to the conclusion that the state of the Empire was not unsatisfactory, and therefore that the enigma did not exist. A transitory improvement in the affairs of Honorius in the year 417, a slight bend backwards towards prosperity of the stream which had been flowing long and steadily towards ruin, might make this contention plausible in the eyes of a small religious coterie; but such desperate optimism was sure to be rejected sooner or later by the common sense of mankind.

The riddle of the age :  
'Why is the Empire falling?'

<sup>1</sup> Gennadius.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

Salvian's  
answer  
'Because  
of the  
vices of the  
Romans.'

With a truer perception of the real conditions of the problem than either of his predecessors, and with the increased knowledge afforded by another generation of manifest decline, Salvian set himself to answer the same question, and arrived at this conclusion, the sum and substance of his whole treatise, 'The vices of the Romans are the real cause of the downfall of their Empire<sup>1</sup>.' The fuller and more complete solution of the problem, namely, the Divine purpose to weld the Latin and Teutonic elements together into a new and happier Europe, does not seem to have presented itself to his mind. Such a conception was hardly possible to a Roman of that age to whom the Barbarian was as much out of the pale of political capability as the Gentile was out of the pale of spiritual privilege in the eyes of the Pharisee. But as a truthful man, enthusiastic, like one of the old Hebrew prophets, on behalf of pure living and just dealing, he saw and could not escape bearing witness to the immense moral superiority of the Barbarians over the Romans. This contrast gives emphasis to all his denunciations of the vices of his fellow-countrymen. 'You, Romans and Christians and Catholics,' he says, 'are defrauding your brethren, are grinding the faces of the poor, are frittering away your lives over the impure and heathenish spectacles of the amphitheatre, you are wallowing in licentiousness and inebriety. The Barbarians, meanwhile, Heathens or Heretics though they may be, and however fierce towards us, are just and fair in their dealings with one another. The men of the same clan, and following the same king, love one another with true affection. The impurities of the theatre are unknown

<sup>1</sup> 'Sola nos morum nostrorum vitia vicerunt' (end of book 7).

amongst them. Many of their tribes are free from the taint of drunkenness, and among all, except the Alans and the Huns, chastity is the rule.' BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

A contrast so drawn between the Teuton and the Latin nations cannot fail to be highly gratifying to the former, and we too, on the strength of our Teutonic ancestry, claim our share in these laudations. But on the other hand, it is impossible not to feel in reading Salvian's book that though he is thoroughly truthful and in deadly earnest, one must not accept as literal truth every point of the contrast which he draws between Roman immorality and Barbarian purity. As Tacitus in the 'Germania' undoubtedly sometimes paints up German freedom in order to render the slavery of Rome under Domitian more hateful by contrast; as the philosophers of last century drew many an arrow from the quiver of the Red Indian to discharge it against the rotten civilization of which France under Louis XV was the centre, so doubtless has Salvian sometimes used the German chastity, the German simplicity of life, to arouse a sense of shame in his Roman reader. Besides, he is preacher as well as man of letters. In reading his pages, one every now and then seems to hear his hand descend upon the rail of the *ambo* in the centre of the crowded cathedral; and at such a time it would be obviously indecorous to suggest a doubt whether a whole German nation could be literally described by one epithet of praise and a whole Roman province by another term of vituperation.

It must be added, moreover, that Salvian admits many blots on the character of his barbarian clients. 'Only,' as he contends, 'not one of these tribes is altogether vicious. If they have their vices they have also

Salvian's  
statements  
not to be  
accepted  
without  
qualifica-  
tion.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

virtues, clear, sharp, and well-defined. Whereas you, my beloved fellow-provincials, I regret to say, with the exception of a few holy men among you, are altogether bad. Your lives from the cradle to the grave are a tissue of rottenness and corruption, and all this notwithstanding that you have the sacred Scriptures in your hands, drawn from the purest sources and faithfully translated, while their sacred books have suffered all manner of interpolations and mistranslations at the hands of evil authors<sup>1</sup>.

The following are the chief passages in which Salvian describes the special vices of the different barbarian races :—

The special  
vices of the  
barbarians.

‘The nation of the Saxons,’ he says, ‘is fierce, that of the Franks untrue, of the Gepidae inhuman, of the Huns immodest. In short, it may be said that the life of all the barbarous nations is a course of vice<sup>2</sup>. But are their vices as blameable as ours? Is the immodesty of the Hun, the perfidy of the Frank, the drunkenness of the Alaman, the rapacity of the Alan, as blameworthy as similar crimes committed by Christians?’ [All of these were heathen, not Arian, nations.] ‘If the Hun or the Gepid deceive, what marvel, since the criminality

<sup>1</sup> ‘Eadem, inquis, legunt illi, quae leguntur a nobis. Quomodo eadem, quae ab auctoribus quondam malis et male sunt interpolata et male tradita? ac per hoc jam non eadem, quia non possunt penitus dici ipsa, quae sunt in aliqua parte vitiata. . . . Nos ergo tantum scripturas sacras plenas, inviolatas, integras habemus, qui eas vel in fonte suo bibimus vel certe de purissimo fonte haustas per ministerium purae translationis haurimus’ (v. 2).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Gens Saxonum fera est, Francorum infidelis, Gepidarum inhumana, Chunorum impudica : omnium denique gentium barbararum vita vitiositas’ (iv. 14). This may be rather a concession for argument’s sake to an opponent than Salvian’s own deliberate judgment on the facts.



of falsehood is unknown to him? If the Frank perjure himself, is that strange, since he looks upon perjury as a mere fashion of speech, not a crime?

Then, side by side with the perjury of the Franks he places the new form of profanity, the oath 'per Christum,' which had come in among the Roman provincials. 'By Christ I will do this,' 'By Christ I say that,' were the perpetually recurring exclamations of the Christian inhabitants of Gaul. Nay, sometimes one heard, 'By Christ I will kill so-and-so,' or 'By Christ I will rob him of his property.' In one case it happened to Salvian himself to plead earnestly with some powerful personage that he would not take away from a poor man the last remnant of his substance. 'But he, already devouring the spoil with vehement desire, shot forth savage glances from his eyes against me, enraged at my daring to interfere, and said that it was now his religious duty, and one which he dared not neglect, to do the thing which I besought him not to do. I asked him "Why?" and he gave me the astounding answer, "Because I have sworn *per Christum* that I would take that man's property away from him<sup>1</sup>."

Profanity  
of Gaulish  
pro-  
vincials.

In another passage<sup>2</sup> he balances the virtues and vices of the chief races of the barbarians against one another in the following fashion:—'The nation of the Goths is perfidious but modest, that of the Alans immodest but less perfidious; the Franks are liars but hospitable, the Saxons wild with cruelty but to be admired for their chastity. All these nations, in short, have their especial good qualities as well as their peculiar vices.' Combining these two passages, and comparing them with hints

<sup>1</sup> iv. 15. Compare the allusions to this habit of swearing on all occasions in the sermons of Chrysostom. See p. 491. <sup>2</sup> vii. 15.

BOOK I. uttered in other parts of the book <sup>1</sup>, we may conclude  
 CH. 20. that, in the relations between the sexes, the Tartar hordes of Huns and Alani stood exceptionally low, and the Goths and Saxons exceptionally high, in the scale of sexual morality. Want of loyalty to solemn treaty-obligations was the chief fault attributed to both Franks and Goths by their Roman neighbours in Gaul. Peculiarly wild and savage cruelty was the besetting sin of our Saxon forefathers. Drunkenness was not then generally laid to their charge, as it was to that of the nation of the Alamanni, who occupied the region of the Black Forest and skirmished by the upper waters of the Rhine.

Salvian's  
 pictures of  
 Roman  
 society.

After all, however, Salvian's sketches of barbarian character, though the most frequently quoted parts of his book, are not so valuable as his distinct and carefully-coloured pictures, evidently drawn from the life, of Roman society and Roman institutions. How vividly he brings before us the debates of a *conventus* (or assembly of *notables*, to borrow a phrase from a much later period of French history) assembled for purposes of taxation in the capital of a Gaulish province.

The Con-  
 ventus.

'Messengers arrive express, bringing letters from the highest Sublimities' [the Emperors] 'which are addressed to a few illustrious persons, to work the ruin of the multitude. They meet: they decree certain additions to the taxes, but they do not pay those taxes themselves, they leave that to be done by the poor. Now, then, you rich men, who are so prompt in ordaining fresh taxes, I pray you be prompt likewise in

<sup>1</sup> E.g. 'Esse inter Gothos non licet scortatorem Gothum: soli inter eos praejudicio nationis et nominis permittuntur impuri esse Romani' (vii. 6).

paying them. Be foremost in the liberality of your contributions, as you are foremost in the liberality of your words. You have been paying long enough out of my pocket; be good enough to pay now out of your own. . . . Does it seem unreasonable to complain that one class orders the taxes which have to be paid by another class? The injustice of the proceeding is most evidently shown by the wrath of these same rich men, when by any chance taxes have been passed in their absence and without their consent. Then you shall hear them saying "What a shameful thing! Two or three persons have ordered a levy which will be the ruin of thousands." Not a whisper of this before, when they were present at the assembly. All which plainly shows that it is a mere matter of pique with the rich that any important matter of taxation should be settled in their absence, and that they have no feeling of justice which would be offended by unrighteous edicts being passed in their presence.

'And as the poor are first to pay, so they are the last to be relieved. If it should happen, as it did on a late occasion, that the Supreme Powers [the Emperors] should, in consideration of the ruined state of the cities, decree a return of some part of the contribution of the Province, at once these rich men divide among themselves alone the gift which was meant to be for the solace of all. Who, then, remembers the poor? Who, then, calls in the needy to share the imperial bounty? When it was a question of laying on taxes, the poor were the only persons thought of. Now that it is a question of taking them off, it is conveniently forgotten that they are tax-payers at all. . . .

'In what other race of men would you find such

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

These ex-  
actions not  
practised  
by the Bar-  
barians,

evils as these which are practised among the Romans? Where else is there such injustice as ours? The Franks know nothing of this villainy. The Huns are clear of crimes like these. None of these exactions are practised among the Vandals, none among the Goths. So far are the barbarian Goths from tolerating frauds like these, that not even the Romans, who live under Gothic rule, are called upon to endure them. And hence the one wish of all the Romans in those parts is that it may never be necessary for them to pass under the Roman jurisdiction. With one consenting voice the lower orders of Romans put up the prayer that they may be permitted to spend their life, such as it is, alongside of the barbarians. And then we marvel that our arms should not triumph over the arms of the Goths, when our own countrymen would rather be with them than with us. . . .

whose land  
therefore  
became an  
asylum for  
refugees  
from the  
Empire.

‘Although the fugitives from the Empire differ in religion, differ in speech, differ even in habit of body from the barbarians, whose very smell, if I may say so, is offensive to the Provincial, yet they would rather put up with all this strangeness among the barbarians than submit any longer to the rampant tyranny of the Roman revenue officers. . . . And thus the name of Roman citizen, formerly so highly valued and even bought with a great price, is now voluntarily abandoned, nay, it is shunned; nay, it is regarded with abomination. . . . Hence it comes to pass that a large part of Spain, and not the smallest part of Gaul, is filled with men, Roman by birth, whom Roman injustice has de-Romanised<sup>1</sup>.’

<sup>1</sup> This passage is taken from Book v, chaps. 7 and 8, freely rendered and combined with chap. 5.

Such was the fiscal condition of the provinces which remained to the Empire in the middle of the Fifth Century. How easily we could imagine, in listening to that description of a Gaulish *conventus*, that we had glided unconsciously over thirteen centuries, and were listening to the preparation of a *cahier*, setting forth the wrongs of the iniquitously-taxed *Tiers Etat* before the convocation of the States General.

The lamentable consequences of such exactions on the condition of the poorer classes are clearly traced in the pages of Salvian. The poor Provincial, who could not fly to the Goths because his whole property was in land, hunted to despair by the tax-gatherer, would transfer that land to some wealthy neighbour, apparently on condition of receiving a small life annuity out of it. He was then called the *dedititius* (or surrenderer) of the new owner, towards whom he stood in a position of a certain degree of dependence<sup>1</sup>. Not yet, however, were his sorrows or those of his family at an end, for the tax-gatherer still regarded him as responsible for his land, and required the old amount of taxes at his hands. From the life-rent for which he had covenanted he might possibly be able to satisfy this demand, but on his death his sons, who had utterly lost their paternal inheritance, and still found themselves confronted with the claim for taxes, were obviously without resource. The next stage of the process accordingly was that they abdicated the position of free citizens and implored the great man

BOOK 1.  
CH. 20.

Downward steps in the course of the small provincial land-owner.

Dedititius.

<sup>1</sup> In the Institutes of Justinian the Dedititii are defined as the third and lowest class of Liberti, 'Sed Dedititiorum quidem pessima conditio jam ex multis temporibus in desuetudinem abiit,' and it is accordingly abolished (i. 5. 3).



BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

Colonus.

Servus.

Cruel  
treatment  
of slaves.

to accept them as *coloni*, a class of labourers, half-free, half-enslaved, who may perhaps with sufficient accuracy be compared to the serfs *adscripti glebae* of the middle ages. But they had already begun to drink, as Salvian says, of the Circean cup of bondage, and they could not stay the transforming process. Before long they became mere slaves (*servi*), without a shadow of right or claim against their new lords. Such was the downward course by which the free Roman landholder was changed into the mere beast of burden of some rich noble who was influential enough to hold at bay for himself the ruinous visits of the tax-gatherer <sup>1</sup>.

Of the condition of the slaves themselves, Salvian draws a melancholy picture. Insufficiently supplied by their avaricious masters with the bare necessities of life, they were almost compelled to rob in order to keep soul and body together <sup>2</sup>, and the masters, however they might affect to blame their thievish habits, knew in their secret hearts that no other resource was left to them. Even when the master himself was tolerably kind-hearted, the common herd of slaves suffered torment from the fellow-slaves who were set over them. The steward, the driver, the confidential valet, were so many petty tyrants who made the life of the poor drudge, whether in the house or in the field, well-nigh unendurable. Sometimes, in desperation, a slave would fly from his fellow-slaves to their common master, and

<sup>1</sup> v. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> In the Theodosian Code, iv. 8. 2, it is ordained that a slave who proves his right to freedom, shall restore to his late master 'quae de furtivis compendiis obscure capta ac pasta sunt.' It was, therefore, a recognised fact that the slave's peculium was mainly made up of his pilferings from his master.

would find a shade more of compassion from him than from them <sup>1</sup>.

BOOK 1.  
CH. 20.

The spirit of injustice, and hard, un pitying selfishness, according to Salvian, pervaded all classes. The prefect looked upon his prefecture as a mere source of plunder <sup>2</sup>. The life of the merchant was one long tissue of fraud and perjury, that of the *curiales* (burgesses) of injustice, that of the officials of calumny, that of the soldiers of plunder <sup>3</sup>.

All pervading spirit of injustice.

The long indictment against the Empire, of which only a few counts are here transcribed, may be closed by Salvian's description of the fall of the two cities of Trier and Carthage, the capitals of the two great provinces of Gaul and Africa. Of both cities he seems to speak from personal knowledge. He resided many years at the former, and a hint which he lets fall makes it probable that he had at least visited the latter.

Three times had Trier, 'the most opulent city in Gaul,' been besieged and taken by the barbarians. Still it repented not of its evil ways. The gluttony, the wine-bibbing, the immersion in carnal delights ceased not; and it was a special characteristic of the place that in all these degrading pleasures old men took the lead. Some of the citizens perished of cold, some of hunger; the naked bodies lay at the head of all the streets, and 'death exhaled new death.' Still the hoary sinners sinned on; and, after the third sack of the city, a few of the oldest, and by birth the noblest among them, petitioned the Emperor for shows in the

Calamities of Trier and unrepentant state of that city.

<sup>1</sup> iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Quid aliud quorundam, quos taceo, *præfectura quam præda?*'

iv. 4.

<sup>3</sup> iii. 10.

BOOK I. amphitheatre (*circenses*) by way of consolation for  
 CH. 20. their losses. The theatrical and amphitheatrical performances of that age, idolatrous in their origin and unspeakably immoral in their tendency, always excited the opposition of an earnest ecclesiastic<sup>1</sup>, and one of the most eloquent passages in the whole book is that in which Salvian rebukes this request of the nobles of Trier for such exhibitions.

Cry for  
 'Circenses.'

'Citizens of Trier, do you ask for games? and that, when your country has been laid waste, when your city has been taken, after the bloodshed, the tortures, the captivity and all the calamities of your ruined town? What can be imagined more pitiable than such folly? I confess I thought you of all men most miserable when I heard of the destruction of your city; but I think you more miserable now when you are begging for games. . . . So then, oh man of Trier! thou askest for public amusements. Where, pray, shall they be celebrated? Over tombs, over ashes, over the bones and the blood of the slain? What part of the city is free from these dread sights? Everywhere is the appearance of a sacked city, everywhere the horror of captivity, everywhere the image of death. . . . The city is black with her burning, and wilt thou put on the sleek face of the merry-maker? All around thee mourns, and wilt thou rejoice? Nay, more, wilt thou with thy flagitious delights provoke the Most High, and draw down the wrath of God upon thee by the vilest idolatries? I do not wonder now, I do not wonder that all these evils have befallen thee. For if three

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the words of the Baptismal Service, 'Abrenuntio diabolo, pompis, *spectaculis* et operibus ejus,' were understood as containing a special reference to the shows of the amphitheatre (vi. 6).

catastrophes failed to correct thee, thou deservedst to perish by the fourth<sup>1</sup>.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

In yet stronger colours does this prophet of the Fifth Century paint the magnificence, the sins, and the downfall of Carthage: Carthage, which had risen again from the dust to be the rival of the towers of Rome; Carthage, rich in all the appliances of the highest civilization, in schools of art, in schools of rhetoric, in schools of philosophy; Carthage, the focus of law and government for the continent of Africa, the head-quarters of the troops, the seat of the Proconsul. In this city were to be found all the nicely graduated orders of the Roman official hierarchy, so that it was scarcely too much to say that every street, every square had its own proper governor. Yet this was the city of which the great African, Augustine, had said, 'I came from my native town to Carthage, and everywhere around me roared the furnace of unholy love<sup>2</sup>.' And too plainly does the language of Salvian, after all allowance made for rhetorical exaggeration, show what Augustine was thinking of when he wrote those words. Houses of ill-fame swarming in each street and square, and haunted by men of the highest rank, and what should have been venerable age; chastity outside the ranks of the clergy a thing unknown and unbelieved, and by no means universal within that enclosure; the darker vices, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, practised, avowed, gloried in—such is the picture which the Gaulish presbyter

Magnificence and wickedness of Carthage.

<sup>1</sup> vi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 'Veni Carthaginem et circumstrepebat me undique sartago flagitiosorum amorum,' Confessions, iii. 1.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

draws of the capital of Africa<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps the weight of his testimony is slightly lessened when he complains in a later passage<sup>2</sup> of the hatred which existed in Carthage against monks, so that when one of that order of men appeared with his pale face and tonsured head in the streets of the city, abuse and execration were wont to arise from the inhabitants against him. The description is so vivid, and Salvian's picture of the vices of the citizens is so black, as to suggest the possibility that he himself, as an ecclesiastic visiting Carthage from Marseilles, had once been subjected to one of these outbursts of fury. But the chief facts to which he bears witness were too notorious to admit of falsification, and are moreover too well confirmed by other evidence.

Purifying  
influence  
of Vandal  
Conquest.

Into this City of Sin marched the Vandal army, one might almost say, when one reads the history of their doings, the army of the Puritans. With all their cruelty and all their greed they kept themselves unspotted by the licentiousness of the splendid city. They banished the men who were earning their living by ministering to the vilest lusts. They rooted out prostitution with a wise yet not a cruel hand. In short, Carthage, under the rule of the Vandals, was a city transformed, barbarous but moral<sup>3</sup>.

Rome fell  
because she  
had proved  
untrue to  
the Aryan  
traditions  
of family-  
life.

The pages of Salvian's treatise are unrelieved by one gleam of brightness or of hope, and it is therefore of necessity a somewhat dreary book to read or to comment upon. But drearier than anything which he has written would be the thought that such a fabric as the Roman Empire, so splendid a creation

<sup>1</sup> vii. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> viii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> vii. 20-22.



of the brain of man, an organization upon the whole so beneficial to the human race, could have perished without an adequate moral cause. That cause he gives us, the deep corruption of life and manners in the Roman world. At the same time he truly remarks that this taint was not found in the genuine old Roman character, but was imported into it from Greece<sup>1</sup>. Looking back through the mists of pre-historic time we can dimly discern the Aryan progenitors of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Goths cherishing certain religious beliefs and certain ideas of a strong and pure morality which guarded the sanctity of the home. The Teutons, when they descended upon the dying Empire, still preserved that precious Aryan inheritance intact. The Greeks had long since lost it or bartered it away for other gifts, the products of their delicious climate, their sensibility to artistic impressions, an analytical intellect and a capacity for boundless doubt. In later ages Rome, influenced by her Hellenic sister, had lost it too, and the corruption of her great cities showed in all its hideousness the degradation which might be achieved by a civilization without morality and without God.

One of her own poets had said, 'Abeunt studia in mores<sup>2</sup>,' or as we might express it, 'Literature colours morality.' It is almost a truism to say that the maxim might be thus developed, 'Morals colour politics.' The character and actions of the individual must affect the character and actions of the community; the more or less of righteousness and purity in the

<sup>1</sup> 'Romani, sed non antiqui, jam scilicet corrupti, jam dissoluti, jam sibi ac suis dispares et Graecis quam Romanis similiores,' vii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Heroides*, Ep. xv. 83.

BOOK I.  
CH. 20.

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citizen influences for good or for evil the duration of the State. By fraud, by injustice, by power abused, by an utter want of sympathy between the classes of society, by a generally diffused 'recklessness of unclean living,' even more than by the blows of the barbarians, fell the commonwealth of Rome.

END OF VOL. I.











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Italy and her invaders

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